My Fourth Tour in Western Australia

Albert F. Calvert
F.R.G.S.

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MY FOURTH TOUR

IN

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Albert F. Calvert

MY FOURTH TOUR

IN

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BY

ALBERT F. CALVERT, F.R.G.S.

Illustrated by Walker Hodgson and from Photographs

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1897

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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY BROTHER

LEONARD

WHO DIED ON THIS TOUR

AT ROEBOURNE

NORTH WEST AUSTRALIA

ON JANUARY 11th, 1896

AND TO

CHARLES F. WELLS

AND

GEORGE L. JONES

WHO LOST THEIR LIVES

ON THE

CALVERT SCIENTIFIC EXPLORING

EXPEDITION, 1896-7

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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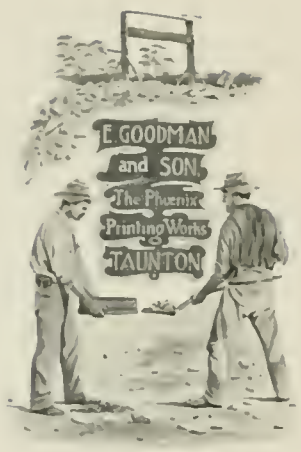
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PREFACE.

IT is not without considerable misgivings that I venture to place before the Public another Volume upon Western Australia. By the number of the books I have made, I am inclined to believe that Job would have found in me an enemy after his own heart. So often have I given my enemies the opportunity for which the Prophet longed, that my hesitation in the present instance arises not from fear of arousing dormant hostilities, but solely out of consideration for my friends. Hitherto, both the Public and the Press have received each of my efforts with a cordiality that I should be loth to forfeit, and the conviction that the praise bestowed has been beyond the measure of my deserts, has warned me of the possibility of wearing out my welcome.

My excuse for once again putting the patience of my readers to the test, must be the fact that, in writing this account of "MY FOURTH TOUR IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA," I have treated the subject entirely from a personal standpoint. I have set down only such things as I saw and heard during my visit, and in so doing I have, to a large extent, sacrificed my opportunities of imparting information in order to confine myself to a narrative of personal experiences. In previous books, my object has been to advance the interests of the Colony, and draw attention to her wonderful, but then little known, resources. During my three preceding visits, much of my time was employed in collecting information for this purpose, and the books that resulted from my researches, were of a kind that are to be found in the Reference Department of Public Libraries. It is not for me to say whether the facts published, and the views I strove to promulgate have, or have not, been of use to the Colony that I have always been ambitious to serve; but it is evident to me that the time

for those labours has gone by. Since I first wrote about Western Australia in 1889, the Colony has progressed by leaps and bounds, and whereas in that year nine out of ten Englishmen were practically in ignorance of its very existence, the aptly named "Coming Colony" is now as well and widely known as any of the great British possessions.

I have, therefore, in the following pages, closed my eyes to Budget speech statistics, and turned aside from tabulated comparisons of trade growth and commercial expansion. The facts and figures that I once made books of, are now chronicled day by day in the leading English newspapers, and it is only left for me to relate the personal impressions of my tour, and touch upon the details that marked its course. I claim no serious merits for my book—my purpose is to interest and amuse.

Much as I am tempted to make separate mention of every person to whom my thanks are due in connection with my tour and with this book, I know that to follow the promptings of my inclinations on this point, would extend this preface by many pages of names. Throughout the trip we met with nothing but kindness on all sides, and I have endeavoured in the following pages to make our poor acknowledgments of the cordial welcome, and the many hospitalities we received wherever we went. But to the members of our little party I wish to tender my special thanks, for the success of the trip was due to the good fellowship, and the happy knack of making the best of everything that prevailed throughout. I do not suppose that a family ever worked so amicably together, day and night, for five months on end, and only those whom practical experience has taught can realize the thousand and one little incidents and accidents that threaten the harmony of such a trip. Through all such dangers and difficulties we steered without mishap. It was chaffingly remarked in Roebourne, that if we all went up country together, the food supply of the North-West would be insufficient for our needs. It certainly ran short on more than one occasion, while the liquor supply proved absurdly inadequate, though only one member of our party turned teetotaler, on other grounds than those of stern necessity. But where the rest of us resorted to whiskey or shandy-gaff as a pick-me-up, our friend, S. H. Whittaker, indulged in a quiet doze. Smartest of special correspondents and

sleepiest of mortals, he asked more questions and made fewer notes than any other man who ever visited Western Australia, and I am beholden to him for much of the information contained in this work, and more especially for the chapter he has contributed upon that portion of the tour that I was prevented from undertaking. My readers, in glancing through this book, will see how largely I have depended upon Walker Hodgson. In fact, Hodgson was, throughout, the lion of our party. Journalists, photographers, and mining engineers were not new even in the bush, but a real artist with a sketch book and the power of filling it with familiar objects, was a man to make much of. Several times it was necessary to rescue him almost by force from a crowd of demonstrative admirers, and I am convinced that he could travel from Roebourne to Marble Bar, and from Marble Bar to Coolgardie, and never have to put his hand in his pocket for his bodily nourishment. William Pollard Harris, who joined us in Cossack, laid the whole party under obligation by reason of a special genius for cooking which he had acquired during his residence in the North-West, and Frank Tooth discovered a talent for the rendering of comic songs that kept many a thirsty camp in good humour. Brenton Symons, though inferior as a soloist, was invaluable in the chorus. Most cautious and indefatigable of mining engineers, most sociable of travelling companions, he evinced an imagination in describing the size of the inguana that attacked him in the Whim Creek Copper Mine that filled us all with envious admiration. Graham Hill, who physicked us all in turn from a medicine box, presented to him by a Perth chemist, but whose only prescription for himself was drawn from a different bottle, will long remember his Christmas Day at Woodstock Station. When I meet him now "on London stones," I remember the long, long journey from Look's Pool to the coast, when he anathematized the tired horses, drank milkless and sugarless billy tea out of empty fruit tins that we picked up on the road, and shared his only pipe with Bill Look and his nigger boy. The recollection calls up a smile now, but it all seemed natural enough at the time. The news that reached us along the route acquainted us with the seriousness of my brother's condition, and we turned day into night to avoid the scorching sun, and yet not delay our return. At every stopping

place along the road we heard fresh news of his illness. He received unremitting kindness and attention at the hands of my friends, Mr. Augustus Roe and Dr. Hicks, but human skill proved unavailing, and on the 11th of January, Leonard died. His sad death cast a gloom over the little party that a few weeks afterwards met to separate again at Albany. Brenton Symons went North, to pay a second visit to the goldfields; Whittaker returned to the city of his adoption; Frank Tooth sailed for the Eastern Colonies, and Graham Hill, Hodgson and myself joined the S.S. "Australia," for England; but for each of us the memories of our trip were saddened by the thought of the lonely grave we had left in the little churchyard at Roebourne.

ALBERT F. CALVERT.

Royston,

Eton Avenue, N.W.,

Queen's Day.

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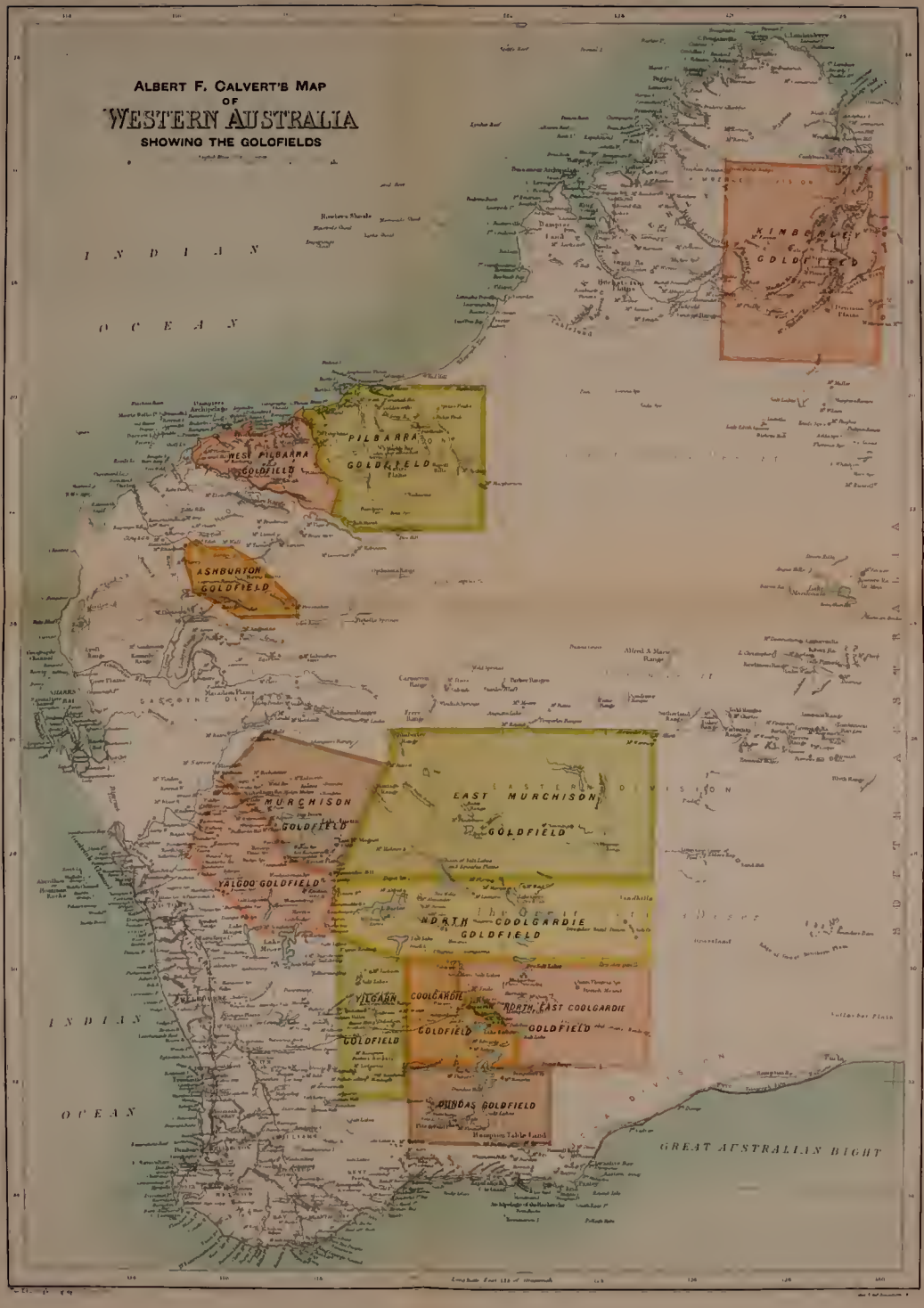
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INDIAN
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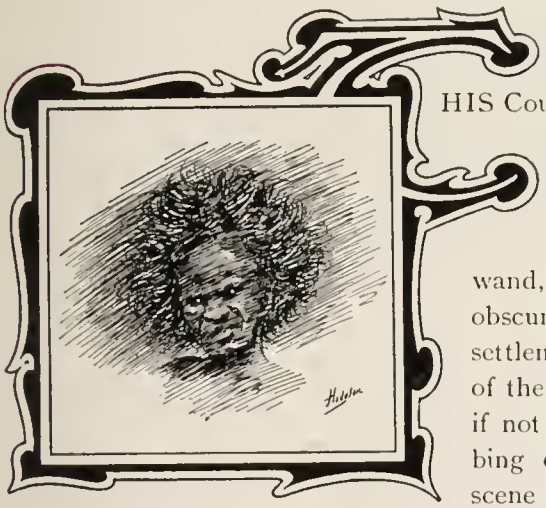
ALBANY FROM THE PIER

ALBANY FROM THE HILL.

My Fourth Tour in Western Australia.

Chapter 1.

Albany Re-visited—The Plague of Flies—Passing the Customs—The Journey to Perth—Discomforts en route—Beverley—Claremont—Perth, the Paradise of Landlords—Expansion of the Revenue.



A "NOBLE, SAVAGE."

"THIS Country," said a scoffer a few years ago, referring to West Australia, "is only in the egg; it is not hatched out yet." To-day the Colony is developing marvellously. Gold, like a magician's wand, has transformed it. Lately an obscure and sparsely-peopled convict settlement, it has leaped into the notice of the world; from a state of lethargy, if not torpidity, it has become a throbbing centre of business activity, the scene of discovered mineral treasure, the goal of tens of thousands of immigrants, the gathering ground of mining skill, the treasury of millions of English and foreign capital.

THE EGG.
UNTOLD GOLD.

The life of the place is felt as soon as the traveller steps ashore from the steamer at Albany. He feels it when he has to jostle for a wash at his hotel; and sees it in shake-downs in every corner, and in the well-thronged

TO "THE GREAT SOUTH LAND." PASSING THE COAST OF AFRICA.

streets. At luncheon the guests plead as well as pay for their entertainment; thick rows of eager callers crowd the bars; the railway station is packed. Double length trains and double engines are requisitioned; the pile of delayed telegrams loom before the gaze of their authors; the town on the days of the arrival of steamers—and they come nearly every day, filled with passengers and cargo—is hot with the press of the inrush of people. Western Australia has suddenly hatched out a brood too large for her wings to cover.

GOING EAST.

To the new chum who arrives in the Colony fresh from the bigness and bustle of the Old Country, Albany has few attractions. There is a home-like appearance about the wooded hill, dotted with stone-built houses, and relieved with dabs of purple, scentless shrubs: but except in the hotel bars and at the railway station, hurry and the whirl of life are seldom seen. The place seems dull, deadly dull, and depressing to the crowd of gold seekers, who halt there for a brief breathing space on their way to the fields. They know that the unwonted activity in the streets and hotels is of their own creating. They surmise correctly that the little town will fall asleep again directly they leave it, and it is not till they have broken down under the strain of the heat and privations of the interior that they return to find new health in the peacefulness and quiet of little Albany. For Albany is the sanatorium of Western Australia, and although it appears to get "no for'arder," and is devoid of the turmoil and excitement attendant upon progress and commercial prosperity, the town still holds its own, and the price of town lots is ever increasing.

Visitors to Albany who are privileged to pass a few hours as the guest of Mr. W. B. Loftie, will be surprised to find how successfully the Government resident and his daughter have contrived to introduce the Old World atmosphere in their Colonial home. The house and its appointments, the pictures and the garden, all remind one of far-away England. For awhile one forgets the existence of the gold fever, and loses the perfume of the miner's kit, to be startlingly reminded of them again amongst the crowd at the railway station. Here everybody is rushing about in search of luggage and a window seat in the stuffy train, and it is curious to notice that each person appears to be signalling wildly with small branches cut from the green shrubs. But these proceedings are due to a different cause altogether: their sole object being to ward off as much as possible the persistent attention of the myriads of flies

ABORIGINAL AND COLONIAL.
A NOTE FROM THE TRAIN.

PIER AT ALBANY.

ALBANY, FROM THE PIER.

that abound everywhere. Directly the visitor steps on to the pier, he is attacked by thousands of these pestiferous little insects, who, from sun up to sun-set, never give one a moment's peace. They joined us at Albany, and were with us in Perth; they accompanied us to the Southern Goldfields, and drove us frantic in the North-West, until we became firmly persuaded that of the seven plagues that visited the Egyptians, the plague of flies was by far the most awful of them all.

It was at Albany that we first went through the ordeal of the Customs House, and while gladly testifying to the unfailing courtesy of the officials of this Department, it must be confessed that passing the Customs is one of the chief terrors of Australian travelling. In our subsequent hasty visit to the Eastern Colonies, we seemed to live in an atmosphere of perspiring attendants and suave officials armed with pieces of chalk, who must have been as heartily tired of repeating the same stereotyped questions as we were of answering them. At Albany, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, and again at Melbourne and Adelaide, the same performance was gone through, and it was a relief when we left King George's Sound, to know that our luggage was safe from molestation until we reached Brindisi. At Albany, however, our troubles on this occasion are soon over. A shot gun is examined with suspicion, a broken box of cigars is handed round and pronounced satisfactory, sketch books are passed without a murmur, and the few remaining clean shirts and collars go unchallenged. Then we stroll over to the railway station to arrange for a special train to convey us as far as Beverley, where we should catch up the mail train, that for some unexplained reason stops during the night at this wretched wayside village.

"THE NEWS STIRS THE MOST TORPID."

The visitor hastens to leave Albany behind him. He will live many years before he forgets his first taste of travelling in Western Australia. He flees to the trains to find surcease at Perth or Fremantle, and finds himself deeper in the toils. After a wild scramble for a seat, the train stops at the first refreshment station, of ignoble memory. A wretched hut, ten feet long and eight feet broad, that might be mistaken for the shabby shelter shed of a watchman, but for the array of cups on the counter, and the helter-skelter rush that is made for it by hordes of travellers, who see a forlorn hope in the crockery-ware. They jump out of the carriages at the risk of their limbs before the train stops, and gaspingly call for a chop or a steak. The girl in charge listens in cool disdain, and points to the cold, muddy tea which has long been waiting for the travellers, and to some ancient sandwiches as the sole resources of the menu, which is vanishing rapidly before clutchful fingers. It is whispered that the Katanning table is not worth waiting for.

So the tea and sandwiches are gulped; the coin rains like hail into the "cash box" saucer; the crush rocks and surges; the starting bell clangs brazenly; the travellers dash into their seats as the train moves. Many of them have failed to get a bite; those who have had a bite loathe it, and as the carriages recede into the distance, the damsel in the shed complacently counts and pockets her gains.

ALBANY, FROM THE POST OFFICE.

ALBANY, LOOKING TOWARDS THE POST OFFICE.

The packed passengers sit on each other's laps, or like trussed fowls, without room to move their elbows, and find a melancholy solace in thinking over the Pullman saloon and sleeping cars, and civilised cookery they have left behind—for a sleeping berth on a long night journey is unknown on the rails of the Golden West, where gate-keepers and interlocking signalling gear have yet to appear, either on the Government routes or this Great Southern Railway, which was made on the land grant system, by a private Company formed in England. The territory ceded to the Company has been so slowly settled, that the train passes over leagues of country upon which there is not a sign of stock, nor a single habitation.

At length the dreary stifling day, without rest or comfort, and the long evening without sleep, draws to a close, and Beverley comes in sight. The news stirs the most torpid to a keener sense of the pangs of hunger. The carriage windows are all thrown down: hands are on the knobs, and as the train is pulling up, the doors are flung open. It is now or never, and a peaked-capped army presses into a building about twice the size of the Mount Barker humpy. What is such a room among so many, what are tables set for forty among a hundred and fifty? A third of the den is taken up by a bar, the front of which is heavy with rows of flabby pies, which have never been in the same town with baking powder to stir them from the consistency of lead, and the inevitable plates of sandwiches, which are one of the most familiar things to be seen on a West Australian Railway. The chairs ought to be three-storied to seat all those who want them; the overflow, as "General" Booth would say, clamour in the bar for drinks, pies, and thin streaks of salt beef between hunks of bread. There is a Babel of shouting, for the situation is getting serious. The train will leave at five o'clock on the following morning, lodgings have to be found and sleep snatched, and, if possible, a wash. The overcrowded and far too "lively" hostelry cannot possibly give shelter to all, and while some secure a corner in the railway sheds, others crawl back into the stationary carriages, or camp out by the side of the line. The place seethes with excitement as the moments flit by. The women who serve out the plates of watery soup and hash alone are calm, while she who receives payment at the door might in imperturbable gravity sit as a study for a modern Sphinx. The outcry of complaint is loud, and yet the directors of the Railway are hardly to blame. While the Colony was in the egg there was so little traffic on the line that travellers might fairly expect to have to "rough it." The invasion of gold-seekers and those who come in their wake has been so sudden and overwhelming that there has not been time to provide any of the luxuries of old world travelling.

GOING OUT—A PASSENGER FOR PERTH.

Five times before had I gone through the discomforts of this unlovely journey, but in the present case we are more fortunate in our mode of travelling. The train had left Albany at nine o'clock in the morning before we landed, but thanks to the peculiar arrangements already referred to, we are able to arrive in Perth next morning at the same

ALBANY, IN THE SUBURBS.

ALBANY, FROM THE BEACH.

time as the mail. An order for a "special" is something out of the common on the Great Southern Railway, and the station-master has his doubts as to the possibility of executing it. However, after much telegraphing, and the issuing of many orders, we are told that a train will be in readiness for us at five o'clock in the afternoon, and then everybody adjourns to the Freemason's Hotel for refreshments. In common with the rest of Albany's floating population, we are anxious to be on our way again, and the day would have been long indeed but for the hospitality of my good friend, Mr. Loftie. The train is ready at five o'clock according to promise; a little crowd of idlers are assembled to see it start, and at the last moment a thoughtful acquaintance arrives with a suspicious-looking wooden case, that had originally been intended for the storage of condensed milk. A sound of tinkling bottles that proceeds from it, as it is pushed under the seat, is an eloquent proof of its aptitude for carrying other commodities.

Our supper at Katanning is neither grateful nor comforting, for throughout Western Australia no regard is paid to comfort when travelling. Nobody seems to give it a thought. The travellers are too busy getting somewhere else, to worry about comforts by the way, and the natives are too busy getting money out of those who are going somewhere else to get more, to attend to these details. The night air is cool when we leave Katanning, and after having resource to the milk case and knocking out our pipes, we prepare to rest. There are only three of us in our compartment, so we retire luxuriously. Collars and boots are taken off, and coats are rolled up for pillows. The third man takes possession of the floor, and to the chirping music of the crickets and the rattle of the train, we fall asleep.

IN THE TRAIN FOR PERTH.
(A PERTH SISTER).

It is a rude awakening at Beverley, for a few of the passengers who arrived by the mail train overnight are up and waiting to continue their journey. They form an audience around our carriage, and study us without surprise or comment as we make our toilet. Every room at the hotel shows traces of having been used as a sleeping apartment. A few people are still wrapped in their blankets, others are waiting their turn at the wash bowl, and the bar is full. To call our efforts with the dirty water a wash is an impertinence, and the breakfast is a direct insult. We are glad enough to get back to the now overcrowded train, and be once more on our way towards the capital.

About noon we steam into Perth Central Station, only to learn from some friends who meet us that every hotel in the city is full, and that accommodation has been secured for us at the Osborne Hotel, Claremont, some eight miles along the line to Fremantle. We had reason, many times during our stay in the Colony, to bless the good fortune that quartered us on Mr. William Astley, whose house for many weeks afterwards we regarded as "home." On each occasion of our return from visits to Coolgardie, the Murchison and the North-West, there was always a hearty welcome awaiting us at Claremont. Robbins, with the buggy, would meet us at the station, and how he contrived, at the rate he drove, to traverse that condemned road between the station and Osborne, and dodge the thousand rucks and holes without smashing the buggy and killing the lot of us, I could never determine. But

A STREET IN ALBANY.

ALBANY, FROM THE HILL.

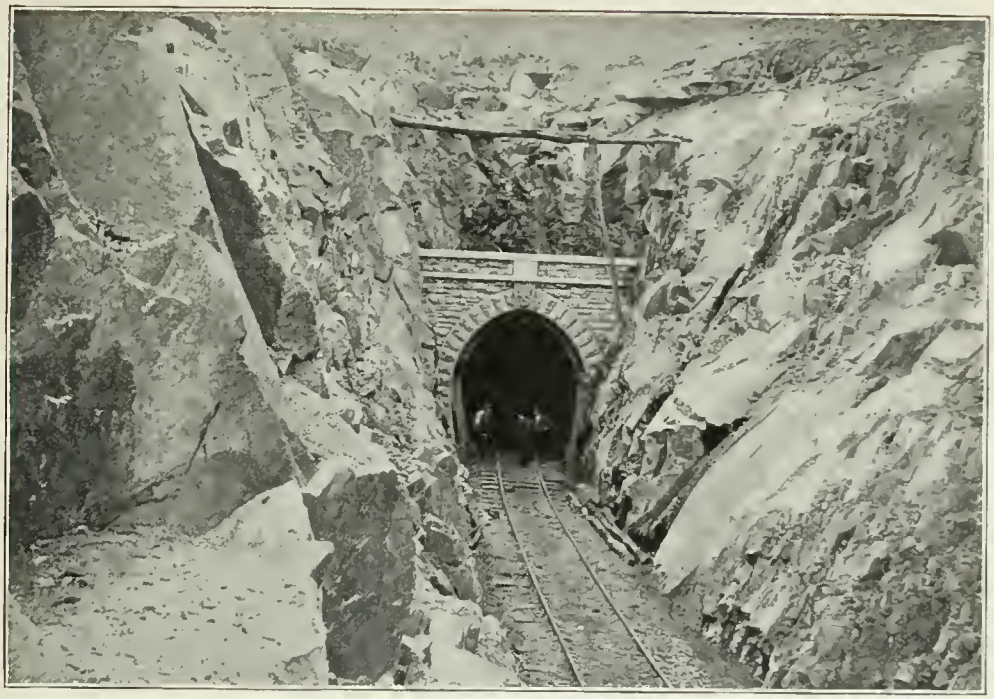
he managed it without mishap during our stay, and I have not heard of his coming to grief since. Half-a-dozen dogs of all shapes, breeds and colours would meet us at the hotel gates and escort us, yelping up to the house. The thought of a cold bath after these trips fills me with recollections of a luxury that still seems to me to be without equal.

Perth is the Paradise of landlords. It should be three times its present size to give house room to the people who are living there. In Melbourne, through hard times, it is common for three or four families to live in one house; in Perth, three or four families live in one house because the times are so good. The new arrival has no option; he cannot get a roof of his own; a "To let" board would be a greater curiosity than the dodo. The hotels are besieged; the boarding houses are crammed. The people who keep them are ingenious. They began by "double-banking" the beds in each room, and all the wire mattress makers worked night and day to meet orders. Then, when from four to eight beds jostle each other for standing place in an attic, the verandah and odd corners become resting places, and, if the people continue to pour in, it will probably become common for them to sleep on the roof. Well, a roof would be as private and more savoury than the backyards, in which some of the commoner sort of bed-providers already put "shakedowns."

ROBBINS
THE FIRST AND LAST DRIVER OF THE PARTY.

The advance advertisements of intending arrivals from the other Colonies—"Wanted to rent premises suitable for large boarding house"—are humorous reading for West Australians. The advertisers might as well ask for the top brick off the chimney of Government House. Premises suitable for boarding houses are a small fortune, and gold mines are not to be had for the asking.

The builders are busy in Perth, but not nearly so busy as they ought to be. The owners of property have no wish to spoil exorbitant rents by keeping the supply of houses equal to the demand. The "t'other-siders," as the new arrivals are called, have mostly suffered too much from the depreciation of real estate in Melbourne, and to a less degree in all the other Colonies, to make them either able or willing to deal again in bricks and mortar. Many immigrants have slender purses; others are "looking around," and another large class devote all their spare capital to the seductive chance of growing rich by a lucky investment in the mines. Moreover, material is both scarce and dear. All these causes combine to raise the rents of Perth property to a high premium, which is rising with the rapidity of mercury on a hot day, and in expectation of the city and suburbs expanding greatly, allotments, on what have hitherto been grazing paddocks, are selling like ripe cherries. Still there is no delirious land boom fever—Victoria presents too near and too



TUNNEL DEVIATION LINE TO ALBANY.

SWAN RIVER, GUILDFORD.

vivid a warning against reckless inflation. There is a brisk and steady business at prudent prices. The features of the frantic gamble of the southern metropolis, with the concomitants of free excursion trains, free lunches, with liquor galore, brass bands, gigantic hoardings, dummy bids, and sensational reports of each Saturday afternoon's fabulous sales, are either absent, or are in an almost invisible germ. One thing that serves to steady dealings in land is that outside the city of Perth there is no water supply, and, therefore, to the price of every building block has to be added the cost of sinking a well, which may be roughly set down at from £25 to £65.

The "good times" in West Australia are reflecting in the great expansion of the revenue, in trade, in the Savings' Banks deposit receipts, and above all, in the enormous sum derived by the Government from the sale of business sites and township blocks at Coolgardie, Menzies, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Norseman, Mount Magnet, Cue, and other newly-established mining centres. In this narrative it is not intended to give many Blue-book statistics under the various heads enumerated, but a few figures may be set down to convey some idea of the rapid progress of the Colony. The Treasurer's income for 1893 was £575,828: for 1894, £681,245: for 1895, £1,125,940: and for the first nine months of 1896, £1,261,150. In his Budget Speech last August, Sir John Forrest estimated that the revenue this year would be £1,291,150, and he, at the date of writing, confidently anticipates that when the financial year closes on the 30th of June next he will have half-a-million surplus in hand.

TRYING BEFORE BUYING.

If there had been no gold discoveries, the whole of the sites of the goldfields centres put together would not have been worth a single sovereign. What they are worth now may be judged from some of the accounts of sales at the Government auctions of last year. Coolgardie alone paid £34,292 15s. for the fee-simple of some of the land on which it is built, long after the central blocks had been parted with by the Crown for about as many shillings. At Menzies, speculators eagerly snapped up the allotments which were offered for £19,290, and Kalgoorlie is next on the list of these lucrative returns with a contribution to the Lands Department of £13,446. Norseman and Kanowna run each

A REACH IN THE SWAN RIVER.

SWAN RIVER, PERTH

other very close in the practical regard of their admirers, which was evinced by local investments in real estate to the amounts of £5,283 4s. and £5,174 respectively. Mount Magnet, considering its youth, makes a creditable appearance as a rising place with the sum of £2,085 to its credit. The total amount received by the Department during 1895, for land sold in goldfields towns, was £83,290 9s., the number of lots being 619, and the entire area 161 acres 3 roods and 5 perches. The great profit the Crown is making out of mining country, both from land sales and leases, has made the mining communities very importunate for railways. They say that they are paying for the lines, and that it is only simple justice that they should get what they pay for. The wealth derived from the goldfields is what induced the Government to abolish the penal railway rates. It used to be pleaded by the Railway Department that it was necessary to make hay while the sun shone, lest there might be decadence on the goldfields, but their rapid development and assured prosperity made this plea too transparent and foolish for even a Government Department to maintain, and it has been abandoned.

SADDLES FOR CAMELS.

The buoyant state of the revenue is reflected in all the channels of commerce. The heading of "New Insolvents" in the Press is practically unknown, restricted credit being the custom of West Australia, which in the early days of its history had so little coin within its borders that barter was a recognised feature of trade. The briskness of business is manifested in the enlargement of old warehouses, the building of new ones, and in the establishment of manufacturing industries. Competition is much keener now than it was while Perth and Fremantle were so obscure as to be hardly worth the attention of the commercial world. The best houses are now eagerly seeking a share of the trade of the Colony, and routes which not long ago were only known to the prospector, are now traversed by commercial travellers of all classes. In Fremantle, as well as in Perth, rows of dingy buildings are being replaced by ornamental, commodious, architectural piles. Thus, the old order is quickly changing and giving place to the new.

The mining boom has made a very striking impress upon the metropolis. Goldfields is the watchword written large upon the displays made by the shopkeepers. The saddlers exhibit a wealth of pack-saddles for camels and horses; the tent makers rival the boarding-house keepers in the number of the calls upon them. The clothiers sell enough kahki suits and blankets, of staring hue and pattern, to outfit an army. The druggists loudly proclaim the virtues of balms for every ill "on the fields." But, like the banner of Excelsior, towering above all other ensigns of the goldfields, in the fore-front of every knot of men bound for the railway stations, garlanding every train, hung in the place of honour at every shop-front, is the ubiquitous, the inseparable, humble friend of the miner —the modest canvas water-bag.

Chapter 2.

The Gold Fever in Perth—The Shamrock Hotel—Amusements in Perth—Reception at the City Hall—Dinner at Osborne—The Railway Station—Northam—The Water Question—Southern Cross.

LORDS OF THE SOIL.

THE air in Perth is full of the yellow fever. Its germs, in the shape of talk of reefs, leases, claims, yields, trial crushings, camels, syndicates, stocks and Company flotations, are as thick as a London fog. In the smoking-room, the bar, the club, the exchange, the bank, and even in the drawing-room, the chorus goes up in praise of Mammon, of the bright yellow metal that is to be won at the cost of sweat, suffering, danger, labour, money—aye, even of men's lives in the arid interior. In the train, the cars, the mail coach, in the halls of the legislature, the marts of commerce, and in the streets, the refrain is heard of gold—gold in nuggets, gold in alluvial, gold in the battery, and gold in the waist-belt of the lucky prospector, who has wrested from its hiding places the metal that is "Loved by the young, hugged by the old, to the verge of the churchyard's mould."

I almost despair of conveying a realistic impression of the absorbing interest that is felt in Perth in the subject of gold mining. It is impossible to speak for two minutes with anybody, from a Cabinet Minister to a cow-minder, without referring to the omnipotent subject that lies closest to the hearts of all. The bar tender, as he passes a drink towards you with one hand, produces from under the counter a handful of specimens from a claim in which he is interested; the barber pauses with the razor poised in mid air, to offer you, at a price, his share in some mine of which he is part proprietor, and every railway porter and cab-driver has either been on the fields or is on the point of starting out to make his fortune there. I had a tooth drawn by a dentist who used his forceps to trace an imaginary boundary of his property on the arm of the operating chair; the direction of the reefs were traced in blood. The few men in Perth who have no properties to dispose of, are touts for those who have, and every shop window in the town contains its complement of specimens of the coveted metal.

A NUGGET FROM "HORSE SHOE BEND," GASCOIGNE FIELD. 7 OZS.

Everyone has a stake in prospectuses to develop ground, to equip parties to search for new Great Boulders, to pay for options, or to fulfil labour covenants. The cable

offices are gorged with messages to record, in the centres of the world, the moves of the great game of mining enterprise, while the Press, the mirror of the day, needs only to be printed on paper of a saffron hue, to be the "very age and body of the time, his form and pressure."

I am not a bit exaggerating when I say that the whole of the business of Perth is in one way or another connected with or resulting from the goldfields, and that every business man in the city is bound, body and soul, to the new industry. In every office that one enters, the conversation is of claims, reefs, syndicates and options, and the public offices and exchanges—the hotel bars—are always crowded with a jabbering, noisy crew, intent upon the various phases of the same subject. Here the miners, fresh from the fields or on their way thither, the touts, the representatives of syndicates, and the general floating population of the city, meet to drink, talk big, and transact their business. The Shamrock Hotel, in Hay Street, must rank first among these public exchanges. The broad balcony is the principal resort in the city, but the Criterion, the Metropole, and the Freemason's, run it close in the number of their adherents. But nine-tenths of the appointments of Perth are couched in the formula—"Meet me at the Shamrock at such-and-such a time," and every man who does business in the town has one or more appointments to keep at this popular rendezvous, during every day of the week. From morning till night the hotel bars do a handsome trade with the single break for the midday meal, when every other public resort, and street, and shop in Perth is deserted, and the various feeding rooms of the city each absorbs its quota of hungry clients. In Perth one cannot feed when one likes, but only when the bell rings. At one o'clock the jangle of many bells is heard in the business quarters, and every man moves towards the dining-room. Nobody can lunch before that hour, and the man lunches badly who comes late. Most of the members of the Weld Club who are in Perth, lunch at their club, and indulge the while in the Englishman's privilege of grumbling, not without reason, at the quality and method of serving every dish that is set before them, while the dining-room of the Legislative Assembly claims the attendance of all who are entitled to the use of it. This institution is by far the best lunching club in Western Australia, and the luncheon served there is correspondingly good.

THE BIRTH OF A TOWNSHIP.

A COSY NOOK ON THE SWAN RIVER.

PERTH.

The impression that a visitor takes away with him of the city of Perth after business hours, depends entirely upon the circumstances of his surroundings and the duration of his stay. There is intellectual society here, if the casual stranger is fortunate enough to be introduced into it; there are billiard tables at the clubs, and there are the refreshment bars at every street corner: but should the question arise in Perth, as it arises in London some thousands of times every evening of the year, "What shall we do with ourselves this evening?" it would be impossible to find a suitable answer. For Perth is a city without amusements; it is as barren of places of public entertainment as the rawest mining township. An occasional amateur concert or theatrical show, or a reception by a wandering phrenologist, are the only substitutes. Two theatres are in course of construction, and already people are beginning to wonder where the companies will come from to occupy them.

One consequence of this dearth of amusements is that private entertainment is popular all the year round, and Perth dines itself publicly, frequently, and well. On this subject I am pleased to be able to speak feelingly and with gratitude, for not in Perth alone, but throughout the Colony I was met everywhere with the greatest hospitality. I had not been in the city half-a-dozen hours when I was invited to attend a reception which the worthy Mayor, Mr. Alexander Forrest, was giving on the following morning to welcome me to the capital. Few people who have spent any time in Western Australia can be ignorant of Mr. Forrest's genius as a host and entertainer, and in the Council chamber of the City Hall at one of those 11 o'clock receptions which have now become celebrated, I could easily understand why the citizens of Perth regretted his legal inability to continue to grace the office of chief magistrate of the city. For four years the Mayor may remain in office if the voters so desire, but at the expiration of that time, a new Mayor must succeed to the honour, and so it was that within a few weeks Mr. H. J. Saunders was to succeed to the mayorial chair. So spontaneous and so hearty was the welcome I received that morning from the councillors and leading citizens of Perth, that I felt that I had almost realised the stereotyped advertisement of the English seaside hotel proprietor, and had found "a home from home." At the last moment, when the waiters had been summoned to "remove the debris," and we were preparing to separate on our various ways, Sir John Forrest himself, heated and hurried, appeared upon the scene. He refused to believe that the reception was over, and the good things were gone, and insisted on holding a reception of his own in the snug smoking room of the Legislative Assembly. More champagne, more speeches and good wishes followed, until one o'clock struck to remind us that luncheon had yet to be partaken of before the good-byes could be said.

THUMB-NAIL SKETCH OF SIR JOHN FORREST.

This was but a foretaste of West Australian hospitality, for a dinner in the evening

HAY STREET, PERTH

WILLIAM STREET, PERTH

and a reception afterwards seemed to constitute an exercise canter to prepare me for the banquet that was given me at the Osborne Hotel on the following evening, when nearly one hundred guests drove out from Perth in the cool of the evening, and drove home again the following morning at—but the time is a detail that does not call for publication.

A TASTEFUL MENU CARD.

Mr. W. T. Astley, who I may mention was for many years the chief steward of the Orient Co.'s s.s. *Oruba*, gave us a dinner that the most severe connoisseur would have applauded; a dinner that many times during our travels in the Colony we harked back upon with greedy lips, and a sad, pinched feeling at the pit of our stomachs. But it would be unwise to linger over these hospitalities, for they lasted from the Thursday until the following Sunday night, and on the Monday morning we were up betimes, and preparing for our afternoon's start to Coolgardie.

The yellow gleams focus themselves at the Perth Railway Station every afternoon, when the train leaves for Coolgardie. The scene is a picture of "Vanity Fair" that Hogarth would have loved to paint. The station is the meeting-place of Labour and Capital. Labour, with horny hand, bronzed cheek, tense sinew, shouldering a swag, strides sturdily to the ticket office, to rub sleeves with the broad-cloth of Capital—to place in relief, as they throng round the pigeon-holes, the difference between the wielders of the pick-axe and the pen. The press of passengers and their friends is so great that no one without a ticket is allowed to pass the platform barrier, and every seat in the train, that will have to travel through the long sultry night without a sleeping-car, is filled. The second-class travellers doff their coats, string their brimming water-bags to the window-sills, and stow away bundles of blankets, revealing here and there the thick end of a beer-bottle. The brokers, mine-managers, geologists, merchants and touring investors next door, put flasks into the hat-rack, briskly scan their latest telegrams, or hold a whispered consultation with a friend, punctuated with nods and keen glances; the good-byes are shouted, and the train glides away, freighted with the devotees of Midas.

ORDINARY WATER BAG.

The ride is through the pretty township of Guildford, one of the fertile spots of the Colony, situated about fifteen miles from Perth, along the course of the picturesque Swan River. Thence, through hill country, to Spencer's Brook, where those who are going to Albany, or to the South-Eastern Colonies to recruit after the enervating life of the goldfields, part company with those who are going to pursue the race for wealth.

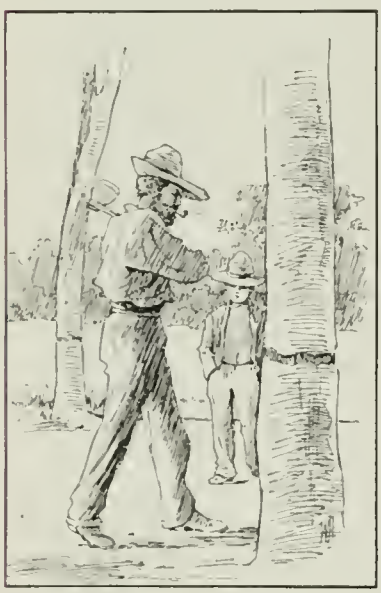
BANQUET AT OSBORNE, CLAREMONT, W.A.

MR. F. MONGER RISES TO PROPOSE "THE GUEST OF THE EVENING"

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, PERTH.

BARRACK STREET, PERTH.

Northam, which lies in the valley of the Avon, stands—as Sir John Forrest, the Premier of the Colony, expresses it—at the gateway of the goldfields. It is a first-class agricultural district, but the land is expensive to clear. An old farming province, and a well-watered one, it finds a lucrative market for grain, hay, sheep, and neat cattle in the mining wilderness. Just now, settlers in the valley of the Avon can get better prices for all they can grow or raise as graziers, than any of their compeers in any other part of the world. Northam is bordered by another rich tract of country known as Greenhills, which is asking urgently for a railway; and it is likely to get it, for when Sir John Forrest and several members of his Cabinet went to see Greenhills for themselves, they found that verily the land was fruitful and fair to look upon. Greenhills carts its produce twenty-five miles to the York Railway Station, and still can make farming pay, with chaff selling for a penny per pound on the goldfields. There is no doubt that Greenhills would have had a railway years ago, had it not been surrounded by the large estates of pastoralists, who have done nothing to improve them, beyond enclosing them with a ring fence. How the early squatters missed the Greenhills flats when they spied out the country, puzzled the Premier and his colleagues, and it is equally a conundrum for all who see the goodly harvests reaped from this fertile valley. Sir John is the enemy of the land grabber, who leaves his ground in a state of nature; and he is the friend of the cultivator, who, in Western Australia, is encouraged by liberal legislation. For example, a selector may obtain 160 acres as a free grant, and 840 acres in addition on payment of six-pence per acre for twenty years, and making certain improvements. On his tour, Sir John Forrest upbraided the land monopolist who does not even ring-bark his land. The Premier publicly says that, if he could have his way, he would buy back with State funds arable areas close to a railway, and after clearing them fit for the plough, he would settle cultivators upon the land, and thus enable them to add to the productive resources of the Colony. The fact that Western Australia paid last year £400,000 for food products, which ought to have been grown in the Colony, is viewed with grave regret by the Government. At the opening of the annual Conference, that is held under the auspices of the Bureau of Agriculture, this year, the Premier announced that the policy of the Ministry, to unlock the lands and to make railways to farming districts, would be more energetically pursued than it had hitherto been.



RINGBARKING.

At Northam, the sojourner quits civilisation and plunges into the desert. The town is the border line between the new and the old—between the patrimony of the ploughman and the miner. The chief hotel in the town is worthy of Perth; the bill of fare would tempt even a languid appetite, and must be luxurious to men accustomed to the diet of a

ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE, PERTH.

ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE, FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

prospector's camp, and who are returning from the mines. The company at dinner is full of one theme—the water difficulty. The all-absorbing topic is how much water there is in the "soaks," the capacity of the condensers, the chances of the mines striking water in their workings, the urgent need of providing an artesian supply at any cost, the proposed boring by the Government to a depth of three thousand feet in search of artesian water, the amount of the rain-fall if it were caught and conserved, the rapid progress that could be made in the opening up of the fields, if only the water difficulty could be subdued. The dining-room echoes the cry of the debates in Parliament—"The future of Western Australia depends upon our goldfields; the future of the goldfields depends upon the water supply." Ministers had protested that they fully recognise the importance of the situation; they were sparing no effort; they were willing to spend a large sum of money; they were sending their head engineer to the other Colonies to procure the best machinery; they were employing the best available skill. To keep the mines going, they were devoting to the task the most anxious thought, and they were resolved to conquer every obstacle to the winning of the precious ores. Only one thing they wanted to be assured of. Was it possible to get an adequate local water supply? If so, the country should not be committed to an expenditure of an enormous sum to provide water works on a colossal scale, or perhaps to bring water from a distance; but water, and plenty of it, the fields should have—if not in one way, then in another. It is well known to what the Government alluded in throwing out these hints, and making these promises, but the magnitude of the proposal may well give them pause, and the idea has never shaped itself into definite form or detail. The exigencies of the fields have made men, casting about for means of relief, talk even of such a mammoth project as the cutting of a canal to tap the Murray or other fresh water coastal river, and no doubt this was in the minds of the members

A WHIP-WELL IN THE DESERT.

ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE, FROM THE POST OFFICE.

FORREST AVENUE, PERTH.

of the Government when they gave their pledges. But the practical, cautious mind of Sir John Forrest recoils from accepting so daring and costly a suggestion, except as a last resource, when everything else has been tried, and failed.

It is eleven o'clock on a clear, cloudless night that we leave Northam. The train is a few minutes late, and we stand on the station beneath the mass of twinkling stars, and change our large, heavy water bags from one hand to the other. The last act of every passenger on leaving a stopping place is to replenish his water bags; his first act on arriving at the next is to call for a "long lager," and if the bottle has been kept in a water vessel he blesses the seller, and parts with his shilling with a feeling of perfect thankfulness. There is a rude awakening at the supper at Hines Hill. The supper is reminiscent of Katanning, only in a different way. Katanning is rough and disappointing.

NOTES ON THE TRACK TO COOLGARDIE.

Hines Hill has bright lights, spotless damask, and a flash of electro-plate. The waitresses are young, be-capped, and nimble footed, but the disillusionment is complete when the guest sits down to a feast of Tantalus. The ham would defy the keen edge of a surgeon's blade; the bread is rocky, the butter rancid, the coffee thick, and the tea, to which one flies in despair, like nothing else on sea or land. This is all, and the guest rises supperless, and sadly bestows half-a-crown on the hostess, who smiles sweetly enough to chase away a frown. Like the cruse of oil of the Biblical widow, or the india-rubber chops of the smart Yankee who did not open his refreshment door until the train was about to start, the Hines Hill stage banquet will not need replenishing until Gabriel's trumpet sounds.

RAILWAY STATION, PERTH.

HAWKES BAY, PERTH.

Southern Cross is the breakfasting place *en route* to Coolgardie. Until Coolgardie grew like the gourd of the Indian juggler, probably no place was so well advertised all over the globe as Southern Cross. Not only was it largely written of when the gold discoveries of the West first came into prominence, but the town obtained a more unenviable name as the refuge of that arch-murderer, Frederick Deeming, "the abnormal offspring of a mother's womb," as Mr. Marshall Lyle, his solicitor, called him, when he was seeking a reprieve of the death sentence on the alleged ground of insanity, which did not save the most savage Blue Beard the world has ever seen from the executioner. The township of Southern Cross lies some distance from the railway station, so that we had not time to inspect "Deeming's cottage," which is pointed out as an object of detestation to nearly every visitor. The Southern Cross mines have not proved to be sensational, but a number of them are giving steady yields, and "hope which springs eternal in the human breast," is always presaging better things when the reefs are further opened up. The station looks out on a drear expanse of sandy country, but the repellent features of the landscape will soon become familiar to the eye, as this is only the fringe of the great western desert. Onward to Coolgardie the rails are laid, not through smiling cornfields, orchards, pasture grounds dotted with homesteads, but over arid wastes, which would be left silent and deserted to the end of time, but for the talismanic power of gold. In these realms of Pluto, of sand, dust and heat, nature has hid her hoards, and locked the door with drought. But the "Nation Builders" found them in the wild ravines, where "the searcher's gold is bought with his own heart's blood," and "where strong men fall and lie like sheep in the thirst of the golden quest":—

> "A handful of workers seeking the star of a strong intent—
> A handful of heroes scattered to conquer a continent.
> Thirst, and fever, and famine, drought, and ruin, and flood,
> And the bones that bleach on the sandhill, and the spears that redden with blood,
> And the pitiless night of the molten skies, at noon, on a sun-cracked plain,
> And the walls of the northern jungles shall front them ever in vain,
> Till the land, that lies like a giant asleep, shall wake to the victory won;
> And the hearts of the Nation Builders shall know that the work is done."

But the work, as Essex Evans so musically writes in *The Australasian*, is not done. It has only been commenced: but it is being vigorously pushed on. A railway to Coolgardie will do a great deal to "conquer the continent." It is a marvel of cheapness, which the British money lender may regard with complacency as an asset that is worth about three times as much as it cost. The route is flat; there are no engineering works worthy of the name. But what brought the price to about £558 per mile, exclusive of the cost of rails, which are supplied by the Government, was the profit the contractors will make on the goods traffic, which is of a special value. When the extension to Southern Cross was made, the fortunate contractors used the line some time before they had to hand it over to the Government. The rush of goods to Coolgardie gave them prodigious profits, which had never been anticipated when the tenders were sent in. Before the day came when they had to surrender the railway, the remarkable growth of Coolgardie, Hannan's (Kalgoorlie), Menzies', Niagara, and Lake Darlôt had quite inverted the theory that a new country has to make lines to encourage settlement and production, and create traffic. If there had been no line, there would not have been as large a population on the field,

THE CAUSEWAY, PERTH

VIEW FROM CEMETERY, PERTH

and as many requisitions for food supplies which the people of the mining centres consume, but cannot grow. Hence, the Southern Cross line was a gold mine to its builders, but when the prices for the Coolgardie section were sent in, it appeared that it was no longer possible for firms to make two profits—for them to build a line at a fair price, and also get a profit from its earnings. In future the Colony must be the gainer—in making of railways to mining fields it must stand "on velvet." In other words, Western Australia can lay these lines for less than half their cost price if only she will give the builder a few months to carry for the public. Of course, what are known as the agricultural lines, have to be paid for at their full price, but the Colony can well afford to do so, seeing that last year the Railway Department netted a profit of £100,000. There was so great a call upon the Southern Cross branch, which earned by far the largest proportion of this sum, that a premium, or a penal rate (as it is variously called by the Department and the miners), was charged to the gold producers. The Department, of course, pleaded the law of supply and demand in justification of this differential rate. The railway manager pointed to the fact that even with the inducement of low charges the branches to other parts of the Colony were not overburdened, while the goldfields' lines were rushed by the public and by consignors, in spite of the charges that were alleged to be excessive. The plea, plausible as it may have been, could not, however, long sustain the pressure of public opinion and the opposition of the miners' representatives in Parliament, and uniform rates on all the railways of Western Australia have now been adopted.

Chapter 3.

The 20-Mile Sand Plain—Boorabbin—The Coolgardie Road—Woolgangie—The Traffic on the Road—The Horses and the Teams.

WHEN we were at Southern Cross, the train only ran to Boorabbin, sixty miles from Coolgardie; now passengers are carried to the Golden City. We left Southern Cross after breakfast in the contractors' cars, and slowly ran through some flat timbered country, chocolate soil, intersected by salt lakes. The chief of these is Rean's Soak, where the condensers have been at work ever since Bayley made his sensational find. The condenser, which for a long time was the mainstay of the water supply along the track, consists of a number of galvanised iron pipes, connecting two tanks or reservoirs. The brine is boiled in the tank at one end of the pipes, and the fresh water steam travelling along the pipes, is conveyed into the other cistern and cooled. The water—according to the intensity of the drought and of thirst—has been sold at from threepence to two shillings per gallon. At first it was the most profitable of all enterprises to start a condenser on the road to Coolgardie. A good stand was like a favourite corner for a tavern, and the goodwill was worth a round sum, especially at the camping places. Then the Government came to the rescue. In response to the loud cry of suffering and of loss that went up to Perth, haste was made to provide a public supply of water at reasonable rates, and, happily, between Southern Cross and Coolgardie the topographical features of the country were found to be highly favourable to the beneficent scheme. Along the road which had been marked out to take advantage of the niggard gifts of the Creator, in the matter of rainfall, rise immense hills of granite, shaped very much like a saucer turned down upon its edge,

A DUSTY TRACK.

but taller in the dome in proportion to the circumference. These cone-shaped rocks are natural catchment areas. Around their base, the prospectors, and later on, the pioneer carriers, used to dig for water to keep themselves and their teams from perishing of thirst, or they would search in the rocks for holes which had caught a little water from a shower. It was evident to the Water Supply Department, that when rain did fall, there was a deplorable waste of water, which, running off the rocks, was lost by soakage in the surrounding country, and plans were approved by the Government to remedy this. The rocks were fenced round; dams were cut at the lowest level in the ground around them, and trenches were sunk in all directions leading to the reservoirs. The result was that the road became passable without the risk, the outlay, or the martyrdom endured by the bold, hardy men, who were the first to leave their tracks upon the route leading to the great town, set in the midst of a brown landscape, and the mining camps beyond Coolgardie. Now-a-days, the salt lake and the condensers are chiefly landmarks of former hardships, which have passed onward, to be repeated "out back," as the saying goes, in the vast Continent, where white men have never trod before.

The train runs out of the forest country on to the 20-Mile Sand Plain, which used to be the terror of teamsters, and the death of many a horse. The snake-like line, winding as far as the eye can reach, is in sight from the carriage windows most of the way, and the still deeper holes with the mounds in front of them, where the digging out spade has been at work, tells tales of the toilsome progress of many a caravan of heavily laden wheels, of many a sinking to the axle. Here and there, lying whiter than the sand, is the skeleton of a horse that dropped by the way, and whose bones have been picked clean by the crows and hawks, which are the only living things to be seen in this gloomy region. The details of the scene when the horse succumbed in the collar, are easy to conjure up, under the tropical sun, which shows in relief the freight-worn road. The jaded horse, panting and goaded by the ever-cracking whip, the dragging limbs, the patient strain, the last convulsive effort to drag the load through clogging drift, the fall to rise no more. A spare set of harness, dangling on the waggon, one horse less in the trace-chains, more cruel overtasking, more thwacking, straining, gasping, the air thicker with blasphemy than ever, and on the load rolls again towards the goal of Coolgardie, the marvellous mushroom city, whose name is blazoned everywhere. This is no fancy sketch. Listen to a teamster, look at the track in the treacherous sand, and you will readily believe that the road has a ghastly history of cruelty to animals. Happily, the train has bridged the 20-Mile Desert, and the sand drifts are erasing the deep spongy trenches through which no wheel has now to pass.

THE COOLGARDIE TRACK. A DONKEY TEAMSTER.

PERTH CUP DAY. LAWN AND STAND.

REVIEW, PERTH, MAY 24TH, 1895.

Boorabbin was built in a few days as the temporary terminus of the line, and it looks like it. Such a sarcasm on a township is a night-mare. It seems to be composed of a semi-civilised aboriginal encampment and all the marine stores in Christendom. Or, changing the simile, it may be likened to the halting place of people fleeing with their household goods from Etna in eruption; or a deliberate burlesque, designed by some lunatic wight, who sought to represent confusion worse confounded. It is a thing of threads and patches, of bags and iron thrown together in the ugliest and flimsiest guise for shops and houses, of goods of all kinds, thrown down on to the sands like the deserted baggage of a routed army in the most disordered retreat. There is a railway-station here, but no sidings, no goods-sheds, nothing but topsy-turveydom. There is one hotel, the proper name for which is a barn. This barn is the palace of the town. For all the remainder of the real estate of the town, an old clothes man would surely hesitate to give many sixpences. There are rows of shanties, for which shanty is a term of flattery—huts made of a few saplings and potato sacks. These are the places of business in the Broadway, or Regent Street of Boorabbin. The main street is a camping place for scores of waggons, and hundreds of horses. Boorabbin is one of those places that could only spring into existence in the wilderness, and at the furthest end of an uncompleted railway line. When another twenty miles of the line is open, the town is moved along bodily and put down again in the same disorder. Broken tent poles, torn canvas, broken bottles, dented tins; in short, a scattered jumble of useless odds and ends is all that will be left upon the sand to mark the deserted base of operations. At the new resting place, the same scene of indescribable confusion occurs over again—the strings of half-piled waggons, the sullen Afghans cursing amongst the stubborn camels, the loafers and the workers all jumbled together in the white glare of the scorching sun, and a solitary police trooper, booted and spurred—the only self-possessed object amongst the crowd, strolling placidly around amidst the confusion. Every man is a law unto himself. Everything, including the weather, is at fever heat. The sun is prostrating, the dust is stifling; the drinks more than luke-warm; the whole place is vile. The most imaginative Boorabbinite, surely, could never hear "Home, Sweet Home," sung without a shudder. It is a place to be approached with repulsion; to be fled from in disgust. Of all the strange offspring of the Golden West, Boorabbin is the most distorted.

HOTEL METROPOLE (AND NO MISTAKE!), BOORABBIN.

We left the place with all speed, as soon as lunch could be eaten, and a special coach team harnessed up. It was necessary, in order that we should keep to our time table, to move on quickly, and never was forced travelling more acceptable. The five horses bent to the collar to move the coach through the sand, which is ground to a fine powder by the waggons, and then through the blinding red dust, which hides the horses from the driver: the journey wound in and out through some stunted trees, between masses of granite smaller than those which have been utilised by the Government as water catchment areas. In the glimpses to be snatched between the whirl-winds of red flour which rose from our wheels, we saw in front of us what appeared to be a solid dark wall. Through the wall, which was of dust, there emerged two coaches; they had come through from Coolgardie. Then we saw

WILD FLOWER SHOW, PERTH.

DWYERS LAKE.

the seamy side of coaching to that city, where horses are so dear to keep, and feed so scarce and costly, that no horse able to stand upon his legs can be given a spell. As the coaches came up, the cracking of whips was as incessant as a fusilade of revolver shots. Creeping through the sand at a staggering walk, with heads bent down, moved the coach team, their nostrils dilated and blood red, the rheum clotted like gore with the ruddy powder from the road, with sides as wet with perspiration as if they had come out of a river, and hide tattooed with the driver's thong. The horses, some of them shrinking from large shoulder galls, stood with heaving flanks, while the coachmen exchanged brief notes of the news of the day. Up till then, I had never seen such a picture of distress, but in the Nor'-West, as will be told in its place, there was as much room for pity for starved and ill-used horse flesh on another day.

Before we had been twenty minutes on the road from Boorabbin, we had become acquainted with the difficulties of the Coolgardie track. It is sometimes referred to as the Coolgardie road, but the man who applied the name to this unique highway would include murder, arson and rapine among the polite arts. It is merely a track cut through the sand, deeply scarred with ruts. In places it narrows across a tract of rocky ground, and again it broadens out to a width of over a quarter of a mile, where successive coach drivers and teamsters have endeavoured to leave the beaten path and find a firmer strip of foothold for the distressed horses. For the most part the way is straight, and both before and behind, as far as the eye can reach, the track extends, a yellow, bumpy, swollen and distorted clearing through the scrub. At each struggle of the horses, and each revolution of the wheels, the sand flies up in the form of a dull red fog, and covers coach, horses and passengers, transforming them into representations of terra cotta images, and filling eyes, ears and nostrils with the pungent dust. Through the thickest part of the road the coach rolls and heaves painfully, and at every small patch of solid ground, encouraging words and persuasive lashes urge the horses into a faster gait. Bump! bump! bump! goes the coach. The inside passengers clutch at the seats to avoid bringing their heads into collision with the roof, and the passengers on the roof seize the rails at every swerve and jolt, and duck their heads as the sweating driver swings his long whip. It is impossible to retain one's position on the roof for fifteen seconds at a time, and the thin, hard cushion which is provided for outside passengers, is all insufficient to break the severity of the concussion. By the time Woolgangie is reached, we have ceased to regard a wooden chair as a comfortable resting place for our weary limbs.

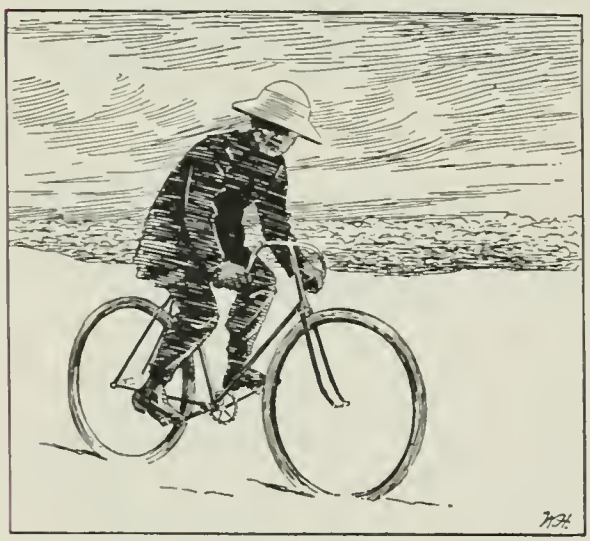
TYPICAL AFGHAN CAMEL DRIVER.
(This Sketch was made in the dark, with the aid of lucifers).

Woolgangie, 36 miles from Boorabbin, and 40 from Coolgardie, is, at the time of writing, the terminus of the line, which, when we were going through, was rapidly being pushed on by a large gang of men at the rate of sixteen miles per month. At Woolgangie the worst of the road has been passed. Beyond this stage there are no sand plains, and, except within ten miles of Coolgardie, no hills; and then only undulating country is met

CLAREMONT.

JARRAHDALE TIMBER STATION.

with, so that, even before the line is completed—which will be before these lines appear in print—the waggon and coach-horses will get some relief on the Coolgardie track. But after the opening of the railway, they will be removed to other routes within the auriferous area, which are just as heavy as the roads I have described. If anything I could say would help to bring about the supervision of horses employed on the goldfields, in order to prevent shoulder-galls, or worn out animals being worked, nothing would give me more pleasure, for there is no doubt that men have to suffer such hardships themselves in the back country, that they often become callous to the suffering of their dumb assistants. On the other hand, I fully admit that the rates paid for cartage have been so good, and the draught teams, which are mostly imported, are so valuable, that, as a rule—and especially since the rails traversed the 20-Mile Desert—the waggoners keep their horses in excellent condition, and except for collar sores, there would not be very much to complain of. The chief evils, against which I make strong protest, are to be found in connection with the comparatively few Western Australian horses employed in the carrying of goods. These teams, possessing the endurance of a mule as hacks or in light harness, are not massive enough to be fit to compete with the imported horses, but they often have to do so, for if a man cannot afford to buy imported horses, his straitened means is prone to lead him to be all the more exacting in what he expects from the native breed. Then, again, in the coaches are to be found horses which, in any other part of Australia, would be turned out in a paddock for a rest, but as there are no paddocks that would supply water and feed for stock in a mining country, and it is too far to send pensioners to town, the coach proprietors think they have some excuse for taking the last ounce out of the occupants of their stables.



FATHER DUFF, THE CYCLING PRIEST, COOLGARDIE.

Woolgangie is the site of one of the largest Government dams; 50 acres of rock, round, rugged and bulky, like a huge wart on the plain, feed the reservoir, which waters every day many hundreds of horses and camels. At nightfall, the scene is a striking one. Teams arrive in battalions along the dusty road, the waggons, the horses, the drivers skin deep in "one red burial blent;" everything is coated thick with ochre, which blinds the eyes, and stops up the nostrils. Hour after hour, from sundown till far after dark, the long procession pours into the camping place, the drays, piled high with merchandise, and with eight, ten, or twelve horses. The pump at the troughs is plied incessantly. The deep-chested heavy draughts strain their eyes eagerly in the direction of the water while they are being unyoked, and as soon as the last buckle is undone, break away to the tank to lave their heads almost up to their ears in their haste to drink. These

HAULING LOGS. KARRIDALE TIMBER STATION

FELLING KARRI KARRIDALE TIMBER STATION.

rocks, one feels, have saved a world of suffering. Thanks to the liberality of the Government, there is no measuring of the water to the thirsty animals. The charge is so small, that every beast is allowed to drink at will. It is only when Darky or Sultan lifts his head with a deep drawn sigh of relief, after the long, hot stage, and can take no more, that he is led away. The corn sacks are opened, the nose-bags filled, and when the monotonous champing on grain and chopped hay is in full swing, the waggoner, who always serves his horses before he serves himself, lights his camp fire, boils the inevitable "billy" of tea, to wash down mutton and damper. The soothing pipe, the rug stretched on the bare ground, a horse collar for a pillow, and the driver—who has spent another day in yelling, whipping, walking, steering, getting fast and getting free, and pushing on to Coolgardie at the average rate of a mile and-a-half an hour—is soon wrapped in the deep slumbers of fatigue. "For weariness can snore upon the flint when rusty sloth finds the down pillow hard."

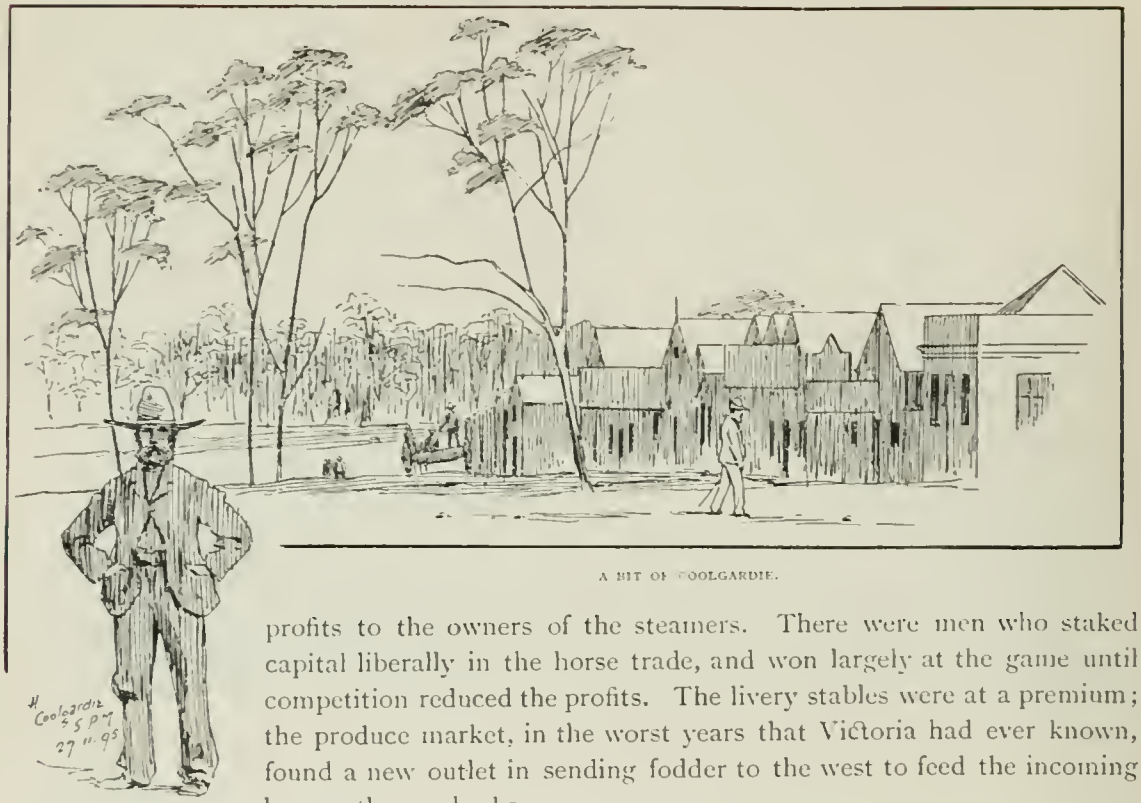
This was practically our first halting place since we started from Perth some thirty hours before, and it was a relief to find ourselves stationary for awhile. We left Perth in suits of sober grey, with clean silk shirts and hats of reasonable dimensions. We slept, or feigned to sleep, in something less than half that amount of clothing, and we emerged from the train at Southern Cross clad in Khaki suits, and hats with brims that in width resembled the roofs of a California verandah. We had sweated in the train, and been baked and bruised in the coach, and we were ready for a rest. If four people performing their ablutions in one basin of water can be called washing, we washed at Woolgangie for the first time since starting, and after a hearty meal we loosened our belts and boot laces, and sprawled about on the warm sand to enjoy a final pipe before retiring to the delights of the wire mattresses. At this period of the day, tobacco smoke seemed sweeter, the tinkle of the camel bells became a lullaby, and we stretched ourselves on the flat of our chests in order to irritate our bruises as little as possible.

THE INEVITABLE "BILLY."

The magnitude of the road transport of goods to Coolgardie is without a parallel, for every other equally popular centre has had time to lay a railway to its doors, long before the carrying trade grew to such proportions. But the sudden creation, and stupendous growth of Coolgardie, the wonderful city of a remote wilderness, came unawares. The desert, which had been almost a trackless solitude, had hardly been invaded by Bayley ere its fame was echoed in the four corners of the universe; it became the Mecca of tens of thousands of pilgrims, and the destination of the cargoes of a fleet of ships. The abrupt pressure of the times made an imperative call upon the teamsters of all the Australian Colonies. They flocked to the new El Dorado. Every intercolonial steamer had its decks encumbered with wains, from which the owners had not stayed to erase the names of hamlets all over the backblocks of Australia. The after-decks became menageries of horses, so thickly massed that the shipping authorities had at last to interfere in the interests of the health and exercise of steerage passengers. Horses arrived at the rate of seven or eight hundred a week, to the behoof of the revenue, which taxed them £1 per head. Some vessels, like the *Nemesis*, slow, but weatherly, carried horses for the Coolgardie road right up to the saloon deck, and carried horses in preference to passengers, who did not pay such large

THE ROAD TO COOLGARDIE GNARLBINE SOAK

THE ROAD TO COOLGARDIE. BOORABBIN SOAK.



A BIT OF COOLGARDIE.

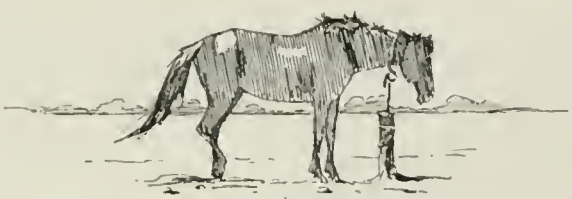
profits to the owners of the steamers. There were men who staked capital liberally in the horse trade, and won largely at the game until competition reduced the profits. The livery stables were at a premium; the produce market, in the worst years that Victoria had ever known, found a new outlet in sending fodder to the west to feed the incoming horses; the sea sharks must have grown fat upon the carcases that were thrown overboard in The Great Australian Bight, although at no time was the rate of mortality very large, except in a few instances when tempestuous weather was encountered. And as fast as the equine levies poured in, they were entrained to Southern Cross to work in the carrying trade to Coolgardie, and to earn the tempting freights which could be paid, or had to be paid by the gold seekers. Month after month the Clydesdales arrived, and still there was no diminution in the demand; every shipload disappeared from the city before the new teams had found their land-legs. The emissaries of the dealers travelled assiduously into all the breeding districts of Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia,

THE WELL-KNOWN RIDING CAMEL "MISERY" HOLDING THE WORLD'S RECORD FOR TRAVELLING WITHOUT WATER.
A. B. BROPHY, PROSPECTOR.

GOVERNMENT WELLS SAND PLAIN

NEARING COOLGARDIE.

where there had been for some time a surplus of draught stock. In Victoria, the soil, the climate, and the rich pastures of the Gouldbourn valley, the Loddon, the Western district, and of Gippsland, are admirably adapted to the development of the horse. While prosperity reigned in that Colony, and railways were being made in every direction with John Bull's money, horse-breeding had been a favourite pursuit. The best blood had been imported, and it was the pride of every farmer to raise high-class plough teams; and then, suddenly, a blight fell upon the value of the stock. The boom period had passed. Victoria, after her commercial Saturnalia, became contrite and frugal. More railways and public works—in the making of which big horses are largely employed—had been constructed than stern economists could justify. New expenditure in this direction was not to be thought of. The value of draught horses in Victoria fell almost as alarmingly as the value of real estate in Melbourne. The paddock of every well established yeoman in a Colony which supports a larger rural population for its acreage, than any other of the Australian group, were full of draught horses. The outlook for the breeder was a gloomy one. Western Australia's gold came most opportunely. Coolgardie had to be fed and clothed; new prospecting parties had to be equipped; mining machinery was wanted. Western Australia required the horses that were such a glut in the Eastern Colonies, and she got them in such large numbers that Victoria became seriously depleted. Every land-holder was tempted to sell even his best stock for more than its home value, and so the buying and the shipping went on until now, it is said, that Victoria—which, in despair, has begun to give up the breeding of heavy horses—has scarcely enough of them to supply her own demands. "If," said a Victorian pastoralist to me, "the Western Australian diggings had not broken out, I believe we should have had to boil down our surplus horses for their fat, which would not have been much, and make boots of their hides."



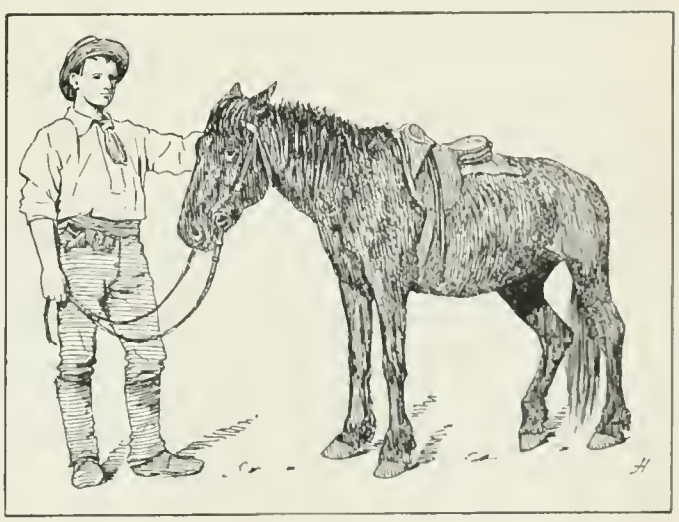
"PEGGED OUT."

Chapter 4.

The "Brumby"—The Woolgangie Cow—The Camels and the Afghans—The Devil's Grip—The Teamsters—The Swampers—The Outskirts of Coolgardie.

"COLOUR" AT LAST.

IT is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Western Australia cannot, or at any rate does not, raise a superior class of horses—that is, as regards size and style. The native horse is very wiry. He will go a longer journey on less food and water than any horse in the world; he is like a mule in his inches and his toughness. No prospector will knowingly take any other than a Western pony, when he goes out to risk his life on long, almost waterless stages. Such a pony will "eut his own hay," *i.e.*, live on scrub or spinifex, and come out at the end of an exploration journey, as lean as a greyhound it is true, but still sound in wind and limb, after going through what would kill a horse bred in any other country. The Western horse is, however, deficient in breeding and substance. As a rule, his owner knows as little about his parentage as Topsy knew about hers. In fact, he is often a "warrigal" or a "brumby" —a wild son of the hills who has been "run in," as the stockman's phrase goes, after a breakneck chase by daring riders, who ride as only an Australian bushman would know how, or venture to do. The "brumby" is the descendant of horses that got astray in the early days, in the unfenced tracts of the Colony, and in his own class of work well repays the trouble of his capture. As the costermonger said of his donkey, the small, western, ewe-necked steed is "a rum 'un to look at, but a good 'un to go." Still, he would generally look as much out of place in a freight waggon as a Shetland pony in a furniture van.



THE "BRUMBY."

A wayside house has been one of the minor chances of the goldfields. A brave heart, a few

pounds, a load of iron, have coined money in the interior of the Golden West. Three self-reliant women "ran" the Woolgangie Travellers' Rest. The place was homely, and the fare not Epicurean, but the most was made of primitive resources. The one luxury was a wire mattress, and the bill-of-fare was sauced with willing service. If the beds were packed close together, the mutton tough, and the preserved vegetables insipid, what matter? It is not long since even these would have been luxuries in the waste of the mining country, where no green thing grows. Omelettes are not to be made without breaking eggs, and to reach the goldfields you must be no carpet knight. The "tender-foot" should stay at home until the train comes by.

Woolgangie has plenty of the grateful shade of brushwood. All the out-houses of the wayside house are of sapling with the leaves left on. The coach-horses have their stables of this Indian kind of architecture; the sad, lean sheep of the commissariat are killed in a leafy bower. The cow—for Woolgangie has a cow—spends her miserable days in an arbour. Of all the distressful sights on the fields, or *en route* to them, the cow is to me one of the most moving. The Man in the Iron Mask was not immured more noisesomely in his dungeon, than the wretched creature whose mission it is to wear out her life in sad repining in the desert. The contrast from the scene she has left is enough to break her heart. The luscious grass, the springing Lucerne plot of the temperate south—the goldfields' cow is always an imported animal, and of a good strain, for no other would keep in milk in the Australian Sahara—must be painful memories, ghosts of joys that are gone for ever. Her anxious, pleading eye looks out on scorched plains, seen through the blinding glare, and day after day she frets out her monotonous, solitary captivity—banished from the meadows, the running brook, the companionship of other kine, the cheerful farm-house. The milking of the goldfields' cow must be a painful task. The pulling at the dugs of the haggard and misplaced beast, for the starving drop of milk, is a ghastly burlesque of the brisk, free, creamy flow which sings merrily into the pail in the dairies of the genial and fruitful south. The Woolgangie cow is an Ayreshire, and for every drop of milk she gives, at least a pint is needed. New milk is what everybody wants, milk for tea, milk for whisky, milk for soda, milk for townsmen, who declare they don't like tinned milk, as though the goldfields' cow was a whole herd, in full profit, in green spring grass up to their knees. The hostess wistfully tries to make the little jug go round. A spasm crosses her face as the guests grumble for more milk. Can she get blood out of a stone, or a plenteous lacteal fluid from such a source? But goaded by the

THE WOOLGANGIE COW.

COOLGARDIE.

BAYLEY STREET, COOLGARDIE.

raucous voice of a burly White Feather man, "Now then, Missus, I likes plenty of milk," she hurries with the empty jug into the Ayreshire's pen to try and squeeze another drop, and returns in despair. The dairy, like everything else on the road to Coolgardie, is stricken with drought.

The coach-horses fare better at the changing stations than the Ayreshire cow, but none too well. They are fairly fed, and it is not so unnatural for a horse as for a cow to be without green food and liberty. He is in his proper place in the collar, if the collar does not ulcerate his shoulders, and the stages are not so long as to make him groggy on his legs, but he is liable to both these ills in the Coolgardie coach, where no substitute can be

TRACKLESS.

found for a "cronk" one at a moment's notice. But "the hammer, hammer, hammer, on the hard, high road," the want of a bite of barley in the spring, is rough on tendons, and irritating to the blood, so that the skin is easily abraded, and all the virtue of bluestone and embrocation often fails to heal the wound, which every trip opens afresh. The sand-hills, the climbing of rocky rises, and the hot weather, tends to shorten the life of a Coolgardie coach-horse. "They don't last long on this road," is what all the grooms say, "but some of them last longer than others." The gamest of them are the most knuckle-kneed, and as the veterans shamble along they are spared by the whip of the severest driver, who, to his credit be it said, remembers their pace and stoutness in better days.

The horses which are fresh on the stations are easily picked out from the old timers. The young ones get the place of honour in the lead, where, with a light heart they fling the miles behind them, ready to do more than their share at the mere swish of the long line of

BAYLEY STREET, LOOKING TOWARDS FLY FLAT

BAYLEY STREET, FROM FLY FLAT.

whipcord curling over their flanks. When they sober down the whipcord strikes as well as frights; then, as the jaded hoofs lose their free pace, the erstwhile colts and fillies are taken from the place of honour and put at the near side of the pole; finally, as the various breaking down stages are reached, they do a turn on the off side, under the whip, before they become food for pigs, or are sold for the price of their hide, to do the slow work of pack-horses.

The pack-horse has, however, been largely superseded by the camel. Thousands of camels have been brought into Western Australia from South Australia, and from India, during the last few years, to the great terror of city horses, whose cause has been espoused in Parliament. The Legislative Assembly has listened for more than an hour to the tale of woe of one of its members, whose horse bolted with him into the Swan River at the sight of a train of the humped-backed brutes, who, as Rudyard Kipling writes, "smells most awful vile." The peril of the member for York let loose a flood of eloquence on the subject of camel nuisances, and the House supped full of horrors for a whole afternoon. The noble horse, it appeared, could not bear to let a camel come between the wind and his nobility. As the unsavoury scent was borne upon his nostrils he became unmanageable, and when, turning a corner, he discovered the "ship of the desert," forty or fifty strong, with their dark-skinned Afghan keepers, he resented their intrusion in a manner that kept the coach-makers' yards full of shattered things on wheels. Ladies were unable to drive their phætons; their husbands drove to the office in fear and trembling because of the camel invasion, and one horse had actually refused to eat for days, because a long-necked foreigner, who could go for a week without water, had been stabled within a quarter-of-a-mile of him. The House, with one accord, agreed that the camel was a public danger, and must be suppressed by the City Council in the interests of the safety of the citizens, like the small-pox or the cholera germ. In future the camel must not be allowed to take his walks abroad within certain prohibited hours, and the haughty Afghan driver must give way on the road with his camel train at the approach of horses.

The fiery steed of the metropolis, riotous with oats and with idleness, may amuse himself with antics when he sees a camel, but the subdued overworked horse of the goldfields has no energy to waste upon such excitements. Like the lion and the lamb of the Millennium, the Coolgardie camel and the Coolgardie horse lie down side by side at the camp at the Woolgangie dam; the horse will even drink at the same trough as the camel without stopping to sniff the ambient air, but the racial antipathy between the teamster and the tawny camel-driver is not so easily appeased. There is no open war between them, only the under-current of a deep and mutual aversion, which is hardly less intense than the fierce, undying, inextinguishable contempt and detestation of the working man, of whatever grade, all over Australia, for the unspeakably-abhorrent Mongolian. The white man, strong in the superiority of race, of the glory of the British Empire, regards the Afghan camel-driver as an effete alien, who is as much inferior to him in brains as in muscle, a trespasser against him in the labour market, and worse than all, a trespasser who is willing to work for a low rate of wages. The Afghans, on their part, reciprocate the dislike, not in open aggression, for they have the sullen cowed air of a subject people, but in the scowling eye and muttered curse as they debouch from the track to allow the waggoners to pass. They

CORNER OF BAYLEY AND FORD STREETS.

WELCOME ARRIVALS IN COOLGARDIE.

are willing to wound but yet afraid to strike, and passively enduring the gibes and the injustice, never provoke a rupture with the whites, whose wrath is to be dreaded.

The camel is one of the great features of the opening up of the goldfields. In the waterless inland West, he finds as congenial a habitat as in the tropical Eastern countries. At home, indeed, his powers of endurance had not so good a field to display themselves as when he joins a prospecting party, the chief of which selects him because of the long time he can go between drinks. The first camels are said to have been brought to Western Australia by the Hindoo brothers, Faiz and Taigh Mahomet, and, although the camels were looked upon with distrust by men who were accustomed to Western horses, they won their way on the test of actual experience, and quickly came into favour. Then South Australia was requisitioned for a supply from the stock which had been bred for use in the Northern territory, and these proved to be so good, that the trade of importing camels assumed large proportions. South Australia not being able to supply a tithe of the orders, steamers were chartered to bring camels from Indian ports, but the South Australian strains always have the call in the market. It is evident that animals bred in Australia have an advantage over those imported, which have to become acclimatised to a new climate and diet, and suffer the strain of a long sea voyage. According to some informants, the Indian camel after his first year here is fully equal to the South Australian breed, but it will readily be understood that prospectors, who are going to break new ground far from any hope of succour, except their own resources, want the very best pack-carriers that money will buy, and are quite willing to leave the seasoning of Indian camels to pack trains on the ordinary well-watered routes of communication between the different fields. The camels, when they land from the ship, have to undergo a month's quarantine, supervised by Government veterinary officers, before they can get a clean bill of health, and during their detention the papers teem with glowing advertisements, inviting inspection of the animals, extolling their virtues as young, sound, well-grown bull camels, which have been specially selected, and are fit for

AT A POLICE CAMP.

THE FIRE AT COOLGARDIE, 1895.

AFTER THE FIRE, COOLGARDIE

any work, and adding that orders will be filed for packs or riding—two very different types of camels, to which further allusion will be made. Meanwhile, the new comers browse contentedly at Subiaco, in an enclosure of sandy heath, destitute of enough grass to feed a bandicoot, but full of scrub, saplings, and trees, which are a good preparation for the barren wastes of the unexplored territory of the largest Colony in the world. When the day of emancipation arrives, there is a great stir in the camp of the Afghan drivers, who have been imported with their charges under agreements, drawn up by their employers, that they shall be taken home after a certain term of servitude—agreements which, by-the-way, have sometimes formed the subject of litigation soon after the men have disembarked, and which, in one case at least, contained a fatal flaw. In declaring the bond null and void, to the loss and inconvenience of the defendants, the Court expressed surprise that the firm in question should have made the engagement in terms so loose and obscure.

The rider is as picturesque, though not so gaudy as his mount. With his blue shirt, red turban, gold braid and wide trousers, stuck into high boots, he rides enthroned aloft behind the hump, holding the landyard that serves as a bridle—the embodiment of the old

MOUNT BURGES.

cavalry sergeant's definition of a good trooper—"a man that sits his horse as if he were part of it." The Afghan, accustomed from boyhood to the peculiar gait of a camel, which is a cross between a springy and very rapid walk, an amble, a canter and a trot, sways backwards and forwards as though he were an automaton set upon a very delicately-balanced pivot. The swaying is the very poetry of motion; he suits the poise to the action and the action to the poise so gracefully, that the rider and the camel make up an harmonious picture, every line and tone of which are in sympathy. How fast he goes, too! There he is behind our coach, just as we are passing a train of pack-camels plugging along with twenty tons of goods. Here he comes. The coach-horses walk up the steep rise; the gaily-dressed hack-camel comes along with his swinging movement, to which hill and plain are all the same. The motion of the bony legs is as even as the beat of a paddle-wheel, facile as the stroke of an eagle's wing. He is level with the coach; he has passed it in a moment, and over the brow of the hill he paces at a rate that will carry the Afghan, with his blankets, food, and the sundries of a fantastic kit, many leagues without a pause.

The coach has two more stages before reaching Coolgardie. It passes over the "Devil's Grip," where even our specially chartered and lightly-laden conveyance has to drop its passengers till it gets through the pinch. The "Devil's Grip" is a cruel tussle for

AFTER RAIN — FLY FLAT, COOLGARDIE.

A HOUSE IN THE WILDERNESS NEAR COOLGARDIE.

the teams. There is half-a-mile of sand—quicksand it might almost be called, so far do the wheels sink into its tenacious depths. The foothold, even to the wayfarer, is as false as dicers' oaths; for the horses it is a veritable Slough of Despond. Some of the teamsters "double-bank," as they call it, by putting on a mate's complement of horses, and then going back for the waggon that has been left behind. Others, who are not "mates" with anyone, take off half their loading, and flog and swear to make one horse do the work of two. It is in the "Grip" that the single file harnessing which is always seen on the track, explains itself. Anywhere, except on the goldfields, horses are yoked two or three abreast for heavy loading. There is a saving of traction, as the horses get nearer to their work, and, consequently, have a better "purchase." No "new chum" can understand why goldfields teamsters throw away power by stringing out their horses in a line, perhaps twelve or fourteen long, until he finds who is to blame. It transpires that the West Australian teamsters, who drove with small loads to Coolgardie when it was first discovered, used to harness tandem-fashion. They "cut the track," and the track is too narrow for two horses to walk abreast—that is to say, a pair of horses would kick the soft stuff into the wheel ruts and make the road impassable for the waggon. Every waggon must have its axle only the width of the track, and that width is narrower than the width of waggons built in the other Colonies. When the invasion of teamsters took place, there were among the new comers men who, confident in their experience and the strength of their horses, prided themselves upon taking to the road with the wide axles. They would, they said, cut their own track, and get the benefit of harnessing up two abreast. But, the "t'othersiders" had to confess defeat: they found that once made always made applies to the road to Coolgardie. To cut a new track on a road so worn and treacherous was impossible, and, reluctantly, the imported teamsters got their axles shortened to run their wheels in the deep, narrow furrows of the route, which only allows twelve horses to do the work of nine. The tourist will find it is an irritating question to ask a driver from "the other side" why he does not couple his horses, and the answer will not be complimentary to his West Australian rival, who chuckles over the narrow axles as one of the very few things in which the "t'othersider" has to follow instead of lead. But the "t'otherside" teamster can teach his native rival several points that he would do well to learn. He can teach him that it is better to outspan and take the road at six o'clock or earlier in the morning than to linger abed until the sun is well overhead before making a move, and he knows how to feed, water and harness up his team, in half the time usually devoted to these operations by the "brumby." For the Westralian teamster has yet to learn the need for haste. "Dam

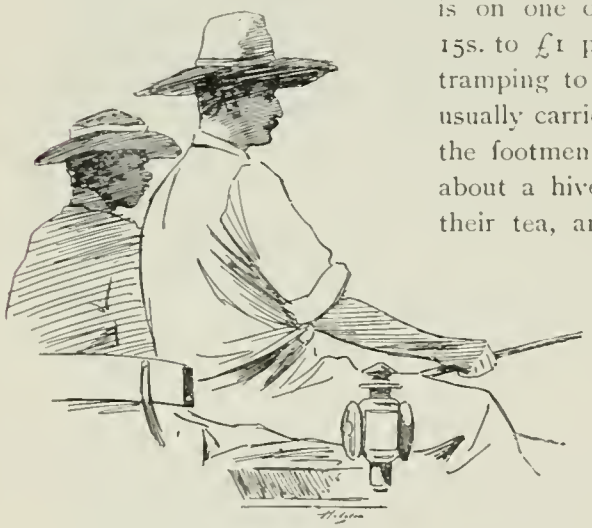
ROCK AND BUSH, COOLGARDIE.

COOLGARDIE FROM MOUNT EVA

COOLGARDIE FROM THE NORTH.

Sandgroper," a Victorian driver, remarked to me as we watched a rival team making their leisurely preparations for a midday start, "S'pose the beggars have been kep' waitin' for their dam shavin' water!" (I had better explain here that the word "Sandgroper" without the prefix, "dam," is not a term of reproach. The native West Australian is a "Sandgroper" just as a Victorian is a "Gumsucker," and a New South Welshman is a "Corn-Stalk," a South Australian is a "Crow-Eater," or an Englishman is a "John Bull!")

Along the wayside, with coats off, carrying walking sticks cut from saplings, without "swags," or even a wallet, to say nothing of a "billy," are to be seen scores of pedestrians stolidly trudging wide of the dusty road. They would look like picnicers who have left camp to pick flowers or explore the neighbourhood, only that one cannot imagine picnic parties in a Sahara, and the garb of the wayfarers is anything but festive, limited as it is to a shirt, wide-a-wake hat, moleskin trousers, and heavy boots. And if they are not picnicers, where are their tents, blankets, rations, or quart pots, for they are a long way from a wayside-house? The coachman says they are "swampers." A "swamper," it appears, is a "swagsman" without his "swag," which is on one of the waggons. The teamsters get from 15s. to £1 per man for the "swamper's" privilege of tramping to the fields without the impedimenta that is usually carried on the wallaby track. At camping time the footmen will swarm round the waggons, like bees about a hive, to get their "bit of tucker" and make their tea, and finally they will reach the mines with most of their coach fare in their pockets, a little late no doubt, but all the better for their 120 mile walk from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. In such a climate, and on such a road, the "swampers" get full value for their swag-money instead of "humping bluey," and the "boodle," as the teamsters call the charge they pocket, helps to pay their heavy corn bills.



A BUGGY DRIVER.

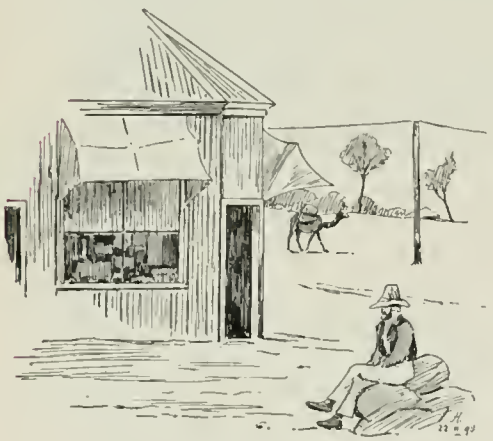
The road is by no means lonely. The commissariat caravans are met with every mile. There are light traps of all sorts going and coming; the hawker's cart, the spring dray, the four-wheeled buggy, the returning procession of teamsters, whose sore-shouldered horses are tied to the tail-board or run loose in its rear, to give them a chance of recovery before loading is taken on again. Some of these empty waggons have a rude awning, under which the drivers recline and doze, for the horses need no guidance where they cannot get off the track. Now we pass a waggonette, in which there are women who have been brave enough to get so far into the wilds, and who look as though they will be very pleased to get back again; there are pony carts and nondescript chaises, in one of which an Italian harpist and his inseparable companion, a violin player, are having a ride

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, COOLGARDIE.

POST OFFICE, COOLGARDIE

to the railway. Perhaps music, excepting what I heard one mine manager call the music of the stampers, has lost its charms at Coolgardie. More "swampers," more lumbering springless jinkers with mining machinery, mammoth boilers and engines; more mountains of stores to feed the multitude gathered at the harvest ground of gold; more men pushing forward on foot and on horse-back, and driving every variety of turn-out, from the spic-and-span American buck-board, to the sorriest of cars. Each mile is a reflex of the surging life of Coolgardie.

Within ten miles of the Golden City, the country, which hitherto has been flat and for the most part of reddish soil, carrying light timber, changes to undulating gravelly tracks, which, after what we have passed through, are agreeable to the eye, although commonplace enough in any other part of Australia. At the foot of one low hill, the spot where a waggon was wrecked through a break giving way, is pointed out. The smash was a fearful one. The run-away load pressing upon the horses forced them into a gallop down the incline. At the foot of the hill, the off fore-wheel struck a tree; the waggon was overturned, two horses were killed, and the loading scattered far and wide. A profusion of splinters of deal cases, almost as small as matchwood, attests the shock of the collision, by which the teamster was ruined. Hard by the first condenser of Coolgardie is seen. It is a very large one, and so excellently equipped as to suggest that it was set up by the Government. Then the roofs of Coolgardie come in sight, looking like a sea of silver; the strong afternoon sun glistens on the houses covered with the familiar iron of the goldfields, and makes a dazzling sheen. The traveller scans with quickened interest the first glimpse of the sensational city which has amazed a universe. The outskirts of Coolgardie are not imposing. A few struggling shanties, some attempt at sanitary work, indicated by the piling together of cartloads of empty jam and preserved meat tins, a notice posted on a tree pointing to the location of the Corporation "tip," catch the eye. Presently, just as the coach is within a quarter of-a-mile of the city, a strange sight, which may be regarded as a happy omen, is presented. The ground, which for the whole of the journey from Woolgangie has been as grassless as a flagged footpath, suddenly bursts into a carpet of cloth of gold. A kind of orange-yellow clover, growing thick and luxuriant, appropriately ushers us into the presence of Coolgardie. The weary wanderer who, crossing the threshold of the goal of all his hopes, may be forgiven if he should be superstitious enough to regard the yellow clover as a happy augury of his future.



A COOLGARDIE CORNER.

Our whip, like the Irish car-driver, has reserved "gallop for the avenue." It is a fetish with all Coolgardie coachmen to enter the town in good style, no matter how tired the team may be. Our horses, which have carried only half the usual load, are comparatively fresh; they respond to the brisk cracking of the whip with something like a show of spirit, and

COOLGARDIE HOSPITAL, GENERAL VIEW

COOLGARDIE HOSPITAL.

sweeping round a corner, Bayley Street—the world-renowned Bayley Street—is before us in all its majestic breadth. The street is broad enough for a review ground. It has been laid out with a prophetic eye. When Coolgardie becomes as colossal as its admirers' dreams, Bayley Street will still do justice to its splendid façades. The road dwarfs the buildings of the present day into meanness. Take away the new Post and Telegraph offices, the Victoria Hotel, and the Chamber of Commerce, and Coolgardie is a shabby, trumpery place from an architectural point of view. The best buildings are of wood and galvanized iron, the worst are cabins of hessian, which, it may be explained—as hessian is one of the next prominent features of the West Australian Goldfields—is the flimsy stuff that bran-bags are made of.

Chapter 5.

The Necessary Wash—Coolgardie's Drink Bill—The Victoria Hotel—The Dining Hall and the Diners—A Few Mine Managers—"Pink Satin"—The First Silk Hat on the Field—A Cautious Miner—All the Delicacies of the Season at Coolgardie—High and Low Prices—The Unemployed of Coolgardie.

THE MAILS delivered, and the passengers set down at the Victoria Hotel, the visitor seeks a room, and may esteem himself lucky if he can get one. A mattress on the verandah, and a wash in the bath-room, are esteemed first-class accommodation. The wash after a ride to Coolgardie is delicious, the sight of water ecstacy. No "burnt-cork artist" ever disguised himself so effectually as after a ride to Coolgardie. The fearful freaks the red dust plays with the images of a coaching party are passing strange. They become the presentments of double-dyed ruffians, who would sell a dying mother's bed, or cut a throat for hire. Nothing is more curious than the gradual transformation. The passengers leave Woolgangie no uglier than the Creator made them. A whirlwind rises, and envelopes the coach, and when it has passed, lo! you see the faces of scowling malefactors, with deep shadows under savage eyes, noses blurred with dissipation, and mouths cavernous and swollen. But these are only the first touches of the brush. The perspiration darkens the paint, the whirlwind blows again and again, each time adding new horrors to the masquerade, until by the time the Victoria Hotel is reached, you shrink appalled from your nearest friend. The wash should be begun with a trowel, to save the water, which is "allowanced." The key of the tap is locked up by the proprietor with his gold. The sluicing operations of the new arrivals almost choke the vent-pipe of the bath. The stuff comes off in layers by dint of hard scrubbing. As each coat of the dark gelatine is removed, something of the natural man reappears, but it is well if the last cupful of the water is not exhausted before you are fit to have a look round the town.

A FAMILY'S ARRIVAL.

HAPPY.

Coolgardie lives at high pressure, and its drink bill is enough to affright the prohibitionist. Nothing can be done

without a drink, and drinks are a shilling a time. The Victoria Hotel is always full. There are crowds in the bars, parlours, and in the spacious billiard-rooms. The pop of corks is heard everywhere. The throng streams in and out, the barmen work like galley-slaves, and still the parched throats are unappeased. No wonder no barmaid need apply. The lustiest Hebe could not stand the strain; but there is another reason for her exclusion. The proprietor, with a nice moral sense, is averse to the employment of the fair enslaver. The stern precisian's rule is felt to be all the more despotic, because at Coolgardie there is very little of the soothing companionship of the gentler sex. Probably there are as many married men there as in any other place of its size, but there are very few wives. The disproportion of the sexes is one of the characteristics of the place, which is not a very eligible home for a woman. It is peopled for the most part with men who have gone there to make money. Their helpmeets are in the old home; their children are being reared in a more bracing climate than that of the northern part of West Australia. The money-order office is the busiest in the Colony, remitting funds to wives and mothers across the sea. And here, of all places in the Colony, where to receive a cordial from a neat-handed Phyllis would make it a new elixir of life, the stony-hearted proprietor of the Victoria Hotel decrees that the portals are barred to the daughters of Eve.

SCENE NEAR COOLGARDIE.

The Victoria Hotel is, except the Chamber of Commerce, the only brick building in the town. The hotel is of two stories, and contains about fifty rooms. The plan is admirably adapted to a hot country. There are broad verandahs front and back. The rear part of the building has two long wings, enclosing a court-yard. To get a bed, you have to telegraph a long time in advance. At least that is the theory, but it has been found in practice that it is

COOLGARDIE CRICKET TEAM AND FRIENDS.

A PROSPECTING TEAM IN BAYLEY STREET

better to post a letter. The Telegraph Department is quite demoralised by the press of mining business, as Sir John Forrest found when he wired to the Victoria from Perth, and arrived before his message, after being two days on the road. As I have said, it is a special favour to get more than a sleeping slice of the verandah, but there is plenty of fresh air there, and you dream soundly enough, if you are not walked over by some fellow-lodger who is seeking his couch in the dark.

The insignia of the dining-hall of the Victoria, its glory and its impress, is a white flannel shirt and pants. This is full dress in the Golden City, no matter what the rank of the diner may be. The sun sways the fashion. The black coat and the stove-pipe hat of the city broker disappear in a temperature of 105 degrees in the shade. The most fastidious Beau Brummel refuses to swelter in them where a bath costs 2s., where heat apoplexy hovers, and where men may dress as they like without being voted vulgar by a circle of lady friends. But the white shirt and pants must be as spotless as snow. Tailors have a slack time at Coolgardie, and laundresses more than they can do. The man who would wear his shirt a second time to dinner would sin against the unwritten laws of the Victoria as unpardonably as the man who ate his peas with a knife.

A PROSPECTOR.

The *personnel* of the diners arrest attention. It is clear that Coolgardie has been the gathering-ground of brains as well as muscle. The type and calibre of the brokers, speculators, representatives of financial Companies, Syndicates, and visitors, show the power of gold to draw together all the most capable elements of the human race. Here are men who bear the stamp of education, of men who have evidently been accustomed to the refinements of life, and who have been habituated to compete against their fellows in large cities under the stern rule of the survival of the fittest. Such men are not usually found in the "back-blocks"—their presence in nascent Coolgardie is unique. From all the great capitals, to join in the race for wealth, have come shrewd business brains, geological lore, mining engineers, and arbiters highly accredited to enter into schemes of great pith and moment. Everyone we meet is deeply absorbed in a gold mine. In this pursuit, home ties are severed, home comforts sacrificed, social banishment endured, and the pleasures

RAVINE NEAR COOLGARDIE

NEW YEAR'S SPORTS—COOLGARDIE, 1895

of London, Paris, New York, or Melbourne given up; the sultriness and strain of the life of the desert uncomplainingly faced by men who, to judge by their appearance, never had the shadow of a physical discomfort until Coolgardie became the mustering-place of intellect, as well as the battle-ground of brain.

The managers of the surrounding mines form the aristocracy of Coolgardie, and miners who are not yet in charge of a claim, live in the hope of obtaining this distinction. Mine managers are unlike any other class of men on the face of the earth; they are a class of themselves, as stockbrokers are, and as Oxford undergraduates strive to be. But there are many varieties of the class, and it is of one or two of these varieties and not of the class that I am thinking. One could sub-divide them in many ways; as, for instance, honest and dishonest, cautious and reckless, extravagant and the reverse, &c.; or one could accept the unwritten creed of every individual mine manager, which holds that all mine managers, with the single exception of himself, are branded in a greater or lesser degree with the curse of incompetence. The old-fashioned miner, who was born in a Cornish tin mine, cradled at Ballarat, educated in California, and "broken" at Charters Towers, turns up his sunburnt nose at the man who went to College and learnt Latin before entering the School of Mines. A man whose lullaby was not the sound of the stamps, and who knew not "tailings" in his hours of infancy, is to the veteran an abomination in a gold mine. There is still another who dates the commencement of his practical experience in mining from the day on which the secretary of such-and-such Company notified him that the directors had approved of his appointment to the general management of the Company's property. And between these two extremes of bashful infallibility and arrogant ignorance, there drifts into the wide harbour of the gold-mining industry a crowd of men who are sometimes clever, often humorous, occasionally conceited, and seldom uninteresting. What they had been before they became mine managers would occupy many pages to chronicle—every calling tabulated in the "Trades" section of the London Directory, and many more that the compilers of that useful little volume do not dream of, have been drawn upon to supply managers of what are usually termed "valuable gold-bearing areas."

WINDSAIL AT A SHAFT.

BAYLEY'S REWARD CLAIM.

THE LONDONDERRY.

There is a man who directs the fortunes of a mine situated within a hundred miles of Hannan's, and the mine is prospering under his capable supervision. That man has travelled over most of the civilised world—as a circus acrobat. He is generally known as "Pink Satin," and after doing his duty in conducting a visitor over the property, he will, if the visitor be sympathetic, take him down to his camp, and produce the pink satin boots of his former profession, and tell yarns of his circus days. He will tell you—if the mood is on him—how he hung on a swinging trapeze by those same heels, and went through sundry evolutions with the manager's wife, which included raising her in mid-air till her face was on a level with his own, and whispering sweet nothings in her ear, while he kept one eye on the manager, who stood in the wings threatening them with a pointed revolver. He was, as I have said, a good man for his position, but I somehow feel that he is wasted amid his present uneventful surroundings. Driving a tunnel into the base of Vesuvius would be more in his line.

The first man who invaded Coolgardie with a silk hat on his head is still spoken of. He was hardly the class of prospector who could have been expected to make his fortune as a gold miner, and he did not belie expectations. He was German by birth, and music was his profession. His age was between sixty and seventy. He inquired of a group of miners the direction in which the gold lay. The tallest man of the crowd answered his question. "Gold," he shouted, "why it's everywhere! Whips of it, all round you!"—a long arm waved excitedly round the German's head—"lashings of it right where you're standing! But you've blooming well got to look for it!" and the big hand came down upon the silk hat and drove it far over the old man's ears. This rebuff did not deaden his ambition, although it ruined his hat. When last seen alive—as the evening papers express it—he was kneeling on a barren patch of sand, and mumbling, as he winnowed the worthless dust through his fingers, "Gold! all gold! a thousand ounces to the ton! enough to pave every street in Germany." He died on his claim soon afterwards, and when they found the body it was too far gone to bear transporting to the little cemetery that had already been started at Coolgardie.

CANVAS WATER JUG.

In the far North-West of Australia there is a man who graduated in crime before he adopted mining as a profession, although his crimes had usually been committed on a gold field. He had been dismissed the Victorian Mounted Police for "going for" his sergeant with a revolver, and he severed his connection with Queensland in consequence of his uncivil demeanour towards Kanaka labourers. In "Golden Australia" he had betrayed his friend, been tried twice for manslaughter, and once for assaulting a native girl with a pick handle. When I last met him he was managing his own claim and terrorising his neighbours, both by words and deeds. It is not unlikely that he will one day die with surprising suddenness, and, as the census is not taken very regularly in this neighbourhood, he will probably be forgotten before he is missed.

The West Australian-born miner is not unusually cautious. I remember well one man who had been born in the Colony, and both his parents had been Irish. He had never

PRINCE IMPERIAL CAMP, COOLGARDIE.

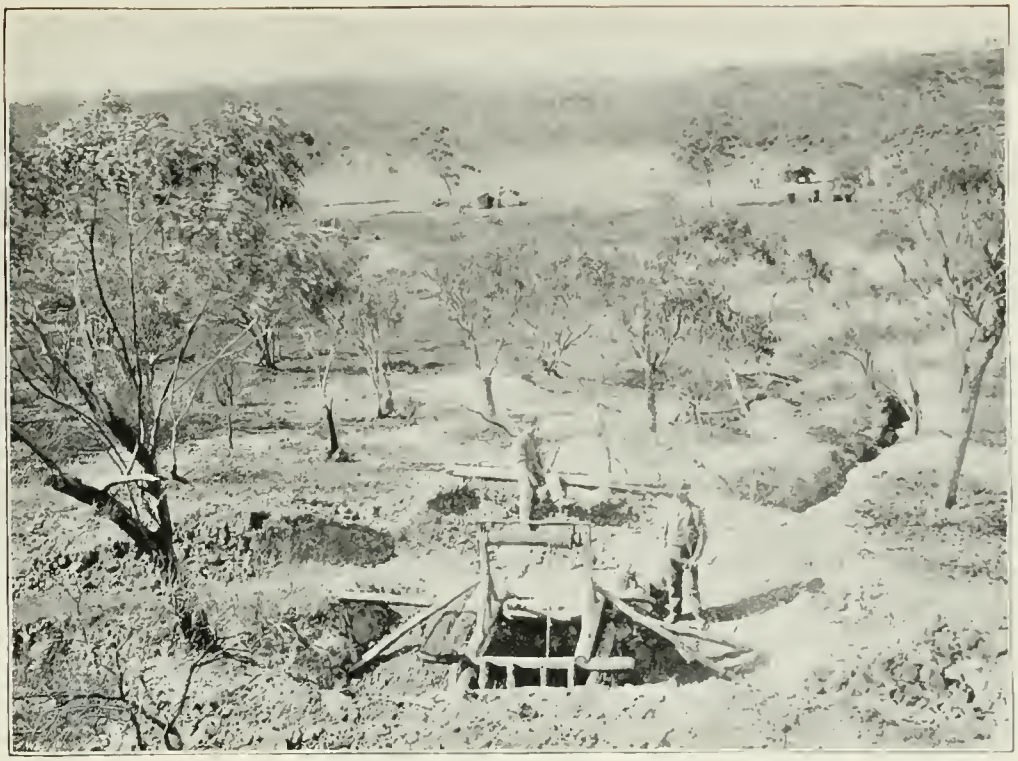
HANDS-ACROSS-THE-SEA.

engaged in any other pursuit than mining all his life. His instincts of cautiousness amounted almost to suspicion, but that may have been accounted for either by his parentage or his calling. A friend of mine bought a mine from him for cash, and the payment was a large one. They met at the Victoria Hotel after banking hours, and my friend tendered the Irish-Westralian miner an open cheque. This, however, was not considered satisfactory, and the vendor demanded cash. My friend prevailed upon the bank manager to cash the cheque, and he returned with a parcel of Union Bank notes as large as a bonnet box. But even this form of payment was not accepted as legal by the old chap, who regarded gold alone as cash. The bank manager, on the second visit, said he would see my friend damned first, and then he would not cash the notes that night. The deal was therefore not completed until the following morning. I was present when the gold was counted out, and the cashier left all his other duties for nearly half an hour until he got the Irish-Westralian's word that the money was correct. "You appear to be as cautious as old Quartz Outcrop himself," I remarked to the cashier, jerking my head towards the ex-proprietor of the claim. "And well I may be," he responded, savagely; "I had to make up four quid the last time the old sinner cashed a large cheque over this counter." No wonder he was so cautious in his dealings with everybody else.

TYPE OF JAPANESE BOY IN A WESTRALIAN HOTEL.

The cuisine of the Victoria is surprisingly good. Delicacies come from Perth, in spite of the distance and the torrid sky. The patrons of the hotel can afford to live on the best that money can buy, and when money is challenged to overcome difficulties, they are generally vanquished. The fish and game are packed in sawdust by a city firm, which makes a speciality of the business, and are despatched to Coolgardie by the mail train to Southern Cross, and thence by special conveyance to the city of the plains. There the perishable luxuries are placed in cool stores, which are thickly walled with charcoal. The hampers, as a rule, accomplish the trip in good order, but sometimes a loss occurs; which, however, must be compensated for by the profits of the business, or the trade would not continue to be carried on after a fairly long trial. Fish has a large share in the consignments. West Australia, which is not bountiful of food for man or beast until forest land is cleared with much cost and labour, and crops are grown, has prodigal harvests of the sea. The schnapper, which is a luxury for the members of select clubs in Melbourne, is the cheapest dish that a labouring man can put upon his table at Fremantle, while the sea mullet, whiting, brean, and a dozen other choice varieties (to say nothing of the so-called salmon, which is almost given away), are too plentiful for the demand. It is no wonder, then, that in spite of the high cost of transport, fish is almost daily served at dinner at the Victoria Hotel.

Western Australia has been called, and not without reason, the land of large prices,



WEALTH OF NATIONS. VIEW FROM SHAFT.

OUTCROP. WEALTH OF NATIONS.

but although high charges are the rule on the road to the goldfields, in the cities and in the mining centres, the rural "brumby" who has not yet become infected with the gold fever from his more advanced neighbour, is, in matters of finance, as innocent as a tent-pole. He is rough, no doubt, and his manners lack polish, but he is guileless upon the value of coin of the realm. In Perth a shave costs sixpence, a shampoo ditto, and a "hair-cut" one shilling: and in Coolgardie the prices are just double, but these rates are modified in the agricultural districts. One of our party who had been spending a few days in a pastoral centre, decided to pay a visit to the local barber, and have his head "shingled" before returning to Perth. The barber was still abed when he called, and after dressing and ascertaining the object of the visit, he flatly refused to comply with it. "It was before business hours," he said, and I believe he would have returned to bed again, but for the importunities of our friend. Grumbling continuously, and with every show of ill humour, he proceeded to shave him, "shingle" and shampoo his head, and bring water and clean towels for the wash up, that brought the proceedings to a close. The charge, inclusive, was fourpence, and the barber indignantly refused to accept more.

After this, it is not difficult to believe the story of the traveller who, after staying two or three days in a country hostelry, offered the landlord English sovereigns in payment of his bill. But the innocent-looking yokel was not to be caught by any such dog's trick—he would convince the Jack-a-Dandy from town that he was not such a fool as he looked. "What's this?" he demanded, looking contemptuously at the gold. "What do you take me for? You can't play that game on me! Take your stuff back, and just sit down and write me an order on Monger, or I'll keep your 'osses till you do." Messrs. Monger and Co. were the merchants in Perth, who at that time supplied nearly the whole of the southern country places, and all the payments received by the local store keepers were in the form of orders on the source of supplies.

AUSTRALIAN TWILIGHT.

A host of people at Coolgardie appear to have nothing to do. The auction marts are always full of loungers, who take no part in the bidding, and seem only to be whiling away time; and listless groups of miners, idly smoking and talking, cluster round all the drinking shops and boarding-houses. It is their notion of enjoying "exemption time"—that is, the month or six weeks at the Christmas season, during which the mines may be idle without disobeying the "labour covenants" of the leases. The holiday is demanded by the heat and the want of variety in the miners' diet. After he has been working for some months in gold-land he gets "run down"; his skin becomes sallow; blotches appear upon it; he has lost his elasticity, and, to some extent, his strength; his thoughts run more fondly than ever

COOLGARDIE, FROM THE ROAD TO HANNAN'S

HANNAN'S.

upon the genial lands he has left, upon the milk, the eggs, the greens, or the boiled turnips of "good old Vic.;" he turns in disgust from tinned salt meat and vegetables, and he yearns for exemption time, when he may roll up his blankets and book a seat by the coach on the first stage of the journey of the wanderer's return. The loungers we see are the men who "haven't got the stuff" to join the exodus to the south. Perhaps they are new-comers, or have "been down on their luck" lately at cards, or, perchance, "Mary and the kids" have been having the doctor in the house lately, and an honest fellow whose heart aches to visit them, can only see his mate off at the coach office, and as he grips his hand at parting, asks him in a husky voice to be sure to go and see them, and send him the latest news.

But if there is some idling done at Coolgardie, there is plenty of keen business as well. The value of the trade of the place is shown by the pocket-handkerchief pieces into which the original allotments are sub-divided. Some of the sheds which do duty as shops are only a few feet square, while what ought to be their yards is full of other huts used by photographers, land agents, and others of that ilk, who have found it impossible to get a stand on the main street. Before Coolgardie can rank, architecturally speaking, with even a second-rate country town, it will have to be re-built. It has been thrown together too hastily for the artificer, and still less the architect, to have had much to do with its composition.

A SUBURBAN VISITOR.

Chapter 6.

Fires at Coolgardie—The Bulletin makes Merry on the Subject—The American Smartness of the Town—The Auction Sales of Stock—The Water Question—The First Discoverer of Fresh Water in Coolgardie—Watering the Stock—How Coolgardie was Built—The First Mayor, Mr. James Shaw—The Shortcomings of the Telegraph Department—The Enormous Increase of Messages—The Woes of the Telegraph Staff—Theatre Royal, Coolgardie—Arrival in Coolgardie—The Missing Mine, and the Missing Owner—A Thunderstorm.

FIRE HAS several times made fearful havoc at Coolgardie, where there is no water to fight the flames, and no fire brigade. Whole blocks have been swept away, and a great deal of damage has been done by an excited crowd desirous of acting as a salvage corps upon threatened premises. In allusion to these misdirected efforts, the following sarcastic inscription appears upon a gaudily-painted axe in a jeweller's window:—

"THE TOM, DICK AND HARRY,

GUARANTEED TO DO £500 DAMAGE PER MINUTE.

AS SOON AS YOU SEE SMOKE WITHIN A MILE, PLEASE TAKE THIS

PATENT FIRE EXTINGUISHER,

AND SMASH EVERYTHING.

BREAK INTO THE PLACE, AND THROW EVERYTHING OUT OF THE WINDOW,

AND APPLY FOR A MEDAL.

COOLGARDIE FIRE DEPARTMENT."

A disastrous conflagration, perhaps the most extensive ever known in the town, took place a fortnight before our arrival. Acres of ground, which had been crowded with stores, were swept bare, giving rise to very exaggerated reports in the Press as to the loss sustained. The *Sydney Bulletin*, referring to these assessments, writes in a characteristic strain:—"The *Argus* (Melbourne), under a big heading about Coolgardie fire, states that the loss was £250,000. The items of this large sum were not given, but can be supplied by any local man. It is not generally known that most of the buildings burned down were hand-painted by old masters. Titian's picture of Moses and the Bull and Bear Rushes, was frescoed by himself on one of the biggest corrugated iron sheds. When the galvanised iron was melted by the heat, it flowed like a lava river, and completely spoilt two Corregios and a Reubens on

an adjacent slab hut. This item alone amounts to £100,000. Then the gum-tree, with the existing mining regulations illuminated on it with rubies and sapphires, was also destroyed. This amounted to £50,000 gone bang. The local groceries were valued at £75 3s., and the drapery burnt cannot be put at a penny less than £33. The balance of the loss is accounted for by the fact that the land Coolgardie stood upon was also burnt up, and the gold contents of the reefs within forty miles were melted, and ran away into the centre of the earth. Further, a large quantity of valuable typhoid microbes were completely destroyed, and at least two hundred and fifty-three reports by mining experts were combusted. One weather-board office, containing the reefs of forty distinct mining leases, was consumed; no trace of these reefs can now be found. The total loss must be near £25,000,000."

THE EVER-WELCOME "BULLETIN."

The *Bulletin*, no doubt, had some grounds for its lampoon, but, nevertheless, the destruction of property was immense. Coolgardie, however, can rival the mushroom in the celerity of its growth, and no sooner did morning dawn after the fire than the smouldering ashes were cleared away, an army of workmen was employed, timber and iron were telegraphed for, and requisitioned from the local merchants. A fortnight afterwards, when we saw the scene of the great burning, nearly all the devastated premises had been re-built.

Coolgardie is not the place for the slow-going drone. The rush there has been so great that there is an American smartness about the town that is in striking contrast to any other *entrepot* in West Australia, which, up to a year or two ago at any rate, rivalled Tasmania in being the land of the somnolent. There are so many shopkeepers in every line, that, in spite of the high rents, prices are cut very fine. As they are usually marked in "plain figures," it can be seen that, allowing for the cost of carriage, the rates are rather below than above those of Perth; but fruit and drinks are notable exceptions to a moderate tariff. Oranges are 5s., and bananas of shrivelled and uninviting aspect 3s. per dozen, while even ginger-beer is 1s. per bottle. At every third door there is a large display of prospectors' and miners' requisites, but, barring the shabbiness of the buildings, there is nothing that is suggestive of the "general store" of an alluvial mining rush, whose stock consists of a waggon-load of goods of every variety, from a needle to a windlass. At Coolgardie, the ironmonger and the saddler, the butcher and the draper, is each as much of a specialist as he is in an old-established town.

The visitor can spend an hour full of novelty at the auction sales of stock. There are two marts, where horses and camels, and all kinds of turn-outs, are sold to the highest bidder. The auctioneers of the two yards are as unlike each other as a patter song and a dirge. The one clatters on like a policeman's rattle; the other's voice is as measured as the strokes of a bell. The voluble man is an artist in words, in painting fancy pictures of

MAIN STREET, HANNAN'S.

THE EXCHANGE HOTEL, HANNAN'S.

the horse. Like the air-drawn dagger of Macbeth, what he has to sell is for the moment a creature of his imagination. The limp of an equine cripple is lost to sight in the glamour of his tongue; the age, leanness or spavin of a crawler become transfigured into the fanciful form of a high-mettled colt champing on the bit, and showing fiery paces. A merrier man within the limits of becoming mirth never mounted a rostrum; quick at repartee to silence a derisive interjection, while his searching eye roves over the crowd, looking for the faintest indication of a bid as intently as a hawk preparing for a swoop into a poultry-yard. The hesitating advance of a timid buyer is snapped up with the avidity of the bite of a shark. The purchasers are cajoled, reproached, flattered, and exhorted with a vehement fluency which only makes a momentary pause, when the hammer comes down with a sharp rap, and a new candidate for exaltation is introduced.

THROUGH THE DREADFUL SAND.

On the fields the eulogy of the horse is attuned to drought. It is not his size, his strength, his swiftness, nor his draught power that the auctioneer or dealer extols. What they tell fables about is the extreme sobriety of the animal that is under offer—in other words, that he does not drink much. Thus we hear Demosthenes in his box in one of his flights of eloquence exclaim when an emaciated, sore-backed weed is led in—"Now, gentlemen, I have to call your attention to a horse that has been out to Lake Darlot (or some other extremity of drought-land) for the last six months. He can go four days without water, and would take you through the gates of Sheol, only that none of you will ever want to go there without looking for a drink on the road."

Coolgardie is not badly off for water for household purposes. It is the scarcity of the supply for the batteries of the mines that causes all the outcry that is so familiar to the ears of investors. Where the battery water is to come from is a problem that it is hoped the new and powerful boring machines purchased by the Government, and which are to be kept going with a large sum of public money, will be able to solve. It is a problem that the

THE SUBURBS OF HANNAN'S.

STREET SCENE, HANNAN'S.

ablest engineers are studying, and it is not too much to say that millions sterling are at stake upon its satisfactory solution. But while the development of the mines is hindered by the shortness of the supply, there is no household drought in the city, although it is true that every man cannot afford the luxury of a daily bath. Yet with two shillings in his pocket a man can get a bath at any moment, all the squibs and caricatures of the funny papers to the contrary notwithstanding. It may be amusing to see a hotel visitor depicted as standing in a pan, being dry-blown with the kitchen bellows in lieu of a wash, while the scullery-man eagerly examines the dish for fine gold; but, as a matter of fact, the sketch is a clever slander on the Golden City.

THE GREAT FIRE AT COOLGARDIE.

Patrick Walsh claims to have been the first man to discover fresh water at Coolgardie, by sinking a well. He went to the field soon after the first rush, and to-day he is a man with a grievance against the Government. The history of his trouble is very simple, and, to a certain extent, it is corroborated by the records of the Lands Department. He put down a well on Crown land, within a few hundred yards of the centre of the town, and on reaching water, drew it at a high profit for the people. The Government surveyed the site of the well, and sold it at auction. The bidding was so high, owing to the value of the water, that Walsh was unable to purchase the site of his find, and he was only paid the cost of his improvements. More sinking was done on adjoining blocks, and every shaft reached a crystal spring. There were four wells in working order when I visited the spot, and Walsh was putting down a fifth. He claims to have performed a great national service for West Australia, and to have been requited with gross ingratitude. He has persistently urged what he deems to be his deserts, but in vain. According to him, his exceptional Queensland experience guided him to the only place where there was underground fresh water at Coolgardie, and he contends that his discovery was worth a bonus and the fee simple of the site of his well, or, at the least, an appointment in the Water Works Department.

The wells are certainly an estimable boon. The buckets, or rather hogsheads, are worked by horse power. The gear and design are of the best, in order to be adequate to the

THE AUSTRALIA HOTEL, HANNAN'S.

OLD WELL AND FIRST, HANNAN'S.

great demands upon the water. Money has been invested by Syndicates in the wells, which are giving a high return upon the outlay. The water is sold at threepence per gallon, and the horse, who walks in a circle, winding a steel rope round a large drum, gets very little rest. The wells are favourite watering-places for stock. The drinking-troughs are divided into measurements, like an apothecary's glass, only instead of drachms and ounces, the trough-markings indicate four, eight, twelve gallons, and so on. When a man brings his horse or camel for a drink, he orders a certain number of gallons, which is forthwith let into the trough by the turning of a tap. The four-footed customer watches the stream as it flows as greedily as a bar-room "bummer," with his mouth watering for full measure. A camel that has done a dry "pad" for the last few days will scream with impatience while his drink is being run out of the tap for him. The last drop may be sucked up with such an air of disappointment, that the owner, taking pity on his faithful hack or pack-carrier, will sometimes re-open his purse to pay for another gallon or two. In his first order, a driver is careful not to call for more than his animal can "put away," for "heel-taps" are the owner's loss. All the water that is run into the trough must be paid for. But the measure is not miserly, and it is said that a miner "down on his luck" can get a free drink for his thirsty beast, or, at any rate, a very liberal drink for a very little money.

EVOLUTION.
A NOTE IN BAYLEY STREET.

The wells are at the foot of one of the small hills which rise all round Coolgardie. The town may be said to be encircled by low, stony ranges, bare and brown. On one of them the shaft of the famous Bayley's Reward Mine is pointed out as an object of special interest in the dreary scene. The Golconda is not a place where a sense of the beautiful can be cultivated. "We have come here to make money, and when we have made it, 'Good-bye-Coolgardie'" is the universal sentiment. It is no wonder that no one would live here except in the service of Dives. Coolgardie is indeed the counterpart of India as a place of profit and penance, and it sends more invalids than India to recruit in latitudes which are more favourable to the vigour of the European. The children seen in this Temple of Mammon are most to be pitied. They are under a most unhealthy strain, which stunts their growth and robustness; they are weazened and drooping, like wilted daisies plucked from their native soil. Happily, there are not many of these little martyrs bearing the heat and burden of the day, for the house-room needful for the setting up of homes and the rearing of families cannot be rented. Every man has to build his own house at Coolgardie, or live in a tent. Hence few of the men of Coolgardie have their children with them.

Even on the outskirts the hammer and the saw are busy. Three large hotels are being built. One of them is a huge two-storied wooden structure, the erection of which has come to a standstill half-way, as if some thought of the pyre it would make in a midnight blaze, while some hundreds of people were asleep within it, had suddenly occurred to the architect, the owner, or the authorities. A more fearful death-trap cannot be imagined than that enormous pile of fuel alight in the small hours of the morning. Strolling round Coolgardie,

POST OFFICE STAFF, HANNAN'S.

THE OLD POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE, HANNAN'S.

whole streets of canvas habitations are passed; miles of sheltered sheds unworthy to be dignified with the name of houses. A year ago Coolgardie was half its present size; a year hence, unless it receives an unexpected check, it will be twice as large as it is to-day.

Nearly all the leading Australian banks have branches at Coolgardie, and they usually occupy the best buildings in the place. In common with the rest of the town, the present structures sprang from small beginnings. The Bank of Western Australia was inaugurated here by a couple of officials sent from Perth. They gave a contract for an iron structure, which was erected in a fortnight. One of the officials then went to Southern Cross, sent his report to Perth, received in reply a box of notes and gold, returned to Coolgardie and opened the first banking establishment in the town. On the following week they sent to headquarters more bullion than they had received to start the business with. The same two men afterwards proceeded to White Feather, built the bank themselves—it consisted of a canvas lean-to—and took it in turns to sit on the safe and warn off doubtful intruders, until a more secure structure could be erected for housing their stock-in-trade.

MR. JAMES SHAW, FIRST MAYOR OF COOLGARDIE.

The first Mayor of the City, Mr. James Shaw, is a man of great force of character. Mr. Shaw, who is most courteous and hospitable to visitors, is an excellent *raconteur*, and he has seen a great deal that is worth talking about. His experience as the first magistrate of one of the most remarkable municipalities on the planet, has been full of stirring incidents of progress. Among the objects of interest in his bureau is a museum of specimens exhibiting gold in stone of the most diverse character. Mr. Shaw, or "the Chief" as he is affectionately called, is the idol of "the boys," and the most popular man in Coolgardie. The stories that are told about him are more numerous than the stories he tells, and one Court incident in particular is worthy of reproduction here. Plaintiff has used insulting language towards defendant, who had promptly retaliated by knocking him down. Plaintiff was sueing for assault, and Mr. Shaw reluctantly awarded him £1 as damages. Plaintiff applied for costs, and his request was met with—"Costs! Certainly not! A man who can't fight shouldn't use insulting language!" Mr. Shaw is a leading stock-broker who has well earned a holiday. He is about to take it, and will leave on his trip to London

THE STOCK EXCHANGE, HANNAN'S.

FACING THE CAMERA.

amid the felicitations of his fellow-citizens. London, it may be added, is the trysting-place of a surprising number of the men one meets at the Victoria Hotel; they have either come from London, or are going there. The congested telegraph line is full of the messages from Modern Babylon. As one of the great arteries along which capital flows to Coolgardie, the cable is an object of intense public interest, and when it is sluggish in its action, the city exhibits every symptom of uneasiness, and makes a loud outcry for remedial treatment.

The Telegraph Department of Western Australia is the target of public abuse. Upon the service is heaped contumely and indignation. There is a deep-voiced demand for the removal of the head of the Department (Mr. Sholl), whom a great many of the people believe has not shown himself equal to the growing business of his office. The newspapers teem with lamentations of loss which is alleged to be caused by bungling and incompetence. The Government suffers more obloquy in this branch of the public service than in all the others put together. They admit the shortcomings, and ask for forbearance while they make reforms. It is pointed out that all the fault does not lie with mal-administration. The Ministerial plea is that the demands on the Department have multiplied so suddenly and enormously that it has been impossible to keep pace with such a phenomenal pressure upon the more or less primitive resources of the service as the prosperity of the goldfields has caused. The rapidity of the increase has been almost unprecedented in the records of the world. There is no doubt that the lines are not what is known as "up-to-date." Long stretches of the wires run along the sea-board, and are affected by marine influences. There are very few changing stations. Moreover, new lines have had to be laid, almost at a day's notice, to new mining centres hundreds of miles apart. The Colony, nor, indeed, the whole of Australia, had not enough wire for this emergency, and the failure to keep sufficient wire in stock to meet all expected and unexpected requirements was made the theme of more maledictions by a furious public. But while the machinery of the Department has, for the time being, been overborne and clogged, the management is strenuously endeavouring to rise to the occasion. Wire in large quantities has been ordered from England; operators by the score have been imported from the other Australian Colonies (particularly from Victoria), and more engagements are being made in the United Kingdom; the most perfect instruments, duplex and quadruplex, will shortly be unpacked. The Government have taken counsel of the ablest experts of their neighbours, and Sir John Forrest is never tired of assuring the public that if the murmurers will only have a little patience, order will be restored out of confusion.

SOMEBODY'S FREAK.
DECORATIVE TREATMENT ON THE TRACK.

There is something in the defence of the Department, that it has been inundated by a cataract of messages. An enormous brokerage business has, ever since the commencement of the mining boom, been conducted by telegraph alone. The gold discoveries have been too sensational, the mines at stake too important, for only mail advices. The cable, not the

EFFECTS OF WIND, HANNAN'S.

LAND SALE, HANNAN'S.

post-office, has, speaking broadly, been the chief recorder of important mining movements in West Australia during the last eighteen months. It has announced finds, made overtures, given options, floated Companies, ordered machinery, transferred capital, and carried secrets of great pith and moment. The echoes of the bourses of the world have vibrated along its surcharged wires, far into the heart of a territory which but yesterday had not even been explored. In the great game in which gold-mines have been the stakes, cable charges have been trifles light as air, and even the double price for "urgent" messages was flung upon the receiving counter without demur.

The first telegraph office built at Coolgardie looks as ludicrous now as a man in swaddling clothes. It is an interesting memento of an infancy that was speedily outgrown, and of falsified prediction. The dwarf has become a giant, and the architect who gauged his future stature while he was in his cradle need not blush, for no one foresaw the Coolgardie of to-day. If there are such as could have divined what was to come, he would have bought for a few sovereigns the whole of the township blocks at the Government land sales, at a trifle over the upset price, and thus have realised a princely fortune.

EFFIGY AT COOLGARDIE OF ONE MCCAWN.

The woes of the telegraph staff have been bitterly complained of. After suffering a long time without being able to get redress, the operators rose in rebellion against unduly long hours of labour, semi-savage sustenance and quarters, and a miserable dole of payment which took no account of the high cost of living on the goldfields. Their address of remonstrance, which threatened an early strike if concessions were not made, asked for payment for over-time, and that the operators should receive an allowance to compensate them for the cost of maintenance and the hardships incidental to so remote a station in a climate that was inimical to health. The Minister saw the justice of their claims, but said that he could not yield demands which were made under duress. To do so, he pointed out, would be derogatory to himself and injurious to the discipline of the Department, but if the menace were withdrawn he would grant relief. The threat of a strike was, therefore, expunged, and the telegraph operators of the mining centres got a differential rate of £40 per annum more than the scale of pay given to the members of the staffs employed in the temperate districts of the Colony. The over-work was reduced as far as possible. The opening of the new Post and Telegraph Offices—a commodious and handsome pile, which we saw nearly completed—will permit of the employment of a larger staff, and as the officers are now more comfortably lodged, all reasonable cause of complaint is to-day a thing of the past.

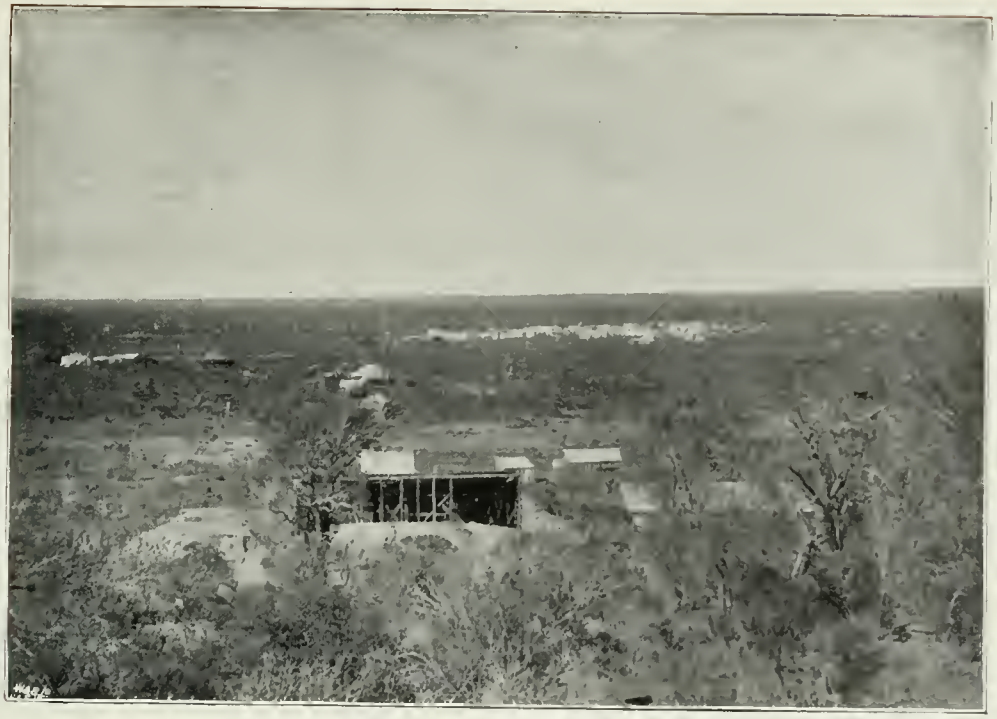
Coolgardie was not long without a theatre. The home of the drama is a large iron building, upon which little money has been spent in the way of ornament. It has tempted a number of companies, chiefly of music-hall celebrity, to undertake the long journey to entertain the gold-seekers, who are still more delighted to do honour to athletic heroes. The pugilist or wrestler of note is always sure of an ovation in the Golden City. Purses are subscribed, matches are made, and full and enthusiastic houses attend to witness and applaud the prowess of the contending gladiators.

HANNAN'S, FROM CASSIDY'S HILL.

HANNAN'S, FROM MARITANA HILL, 1894.

It was shortly after noon, on a sultry summer day, at the end of November, when we arrived at Summers Hotel, and after a short rest for a wash and a meal, we drove out again on a visit to some of the neighbouring mines. Our start was hastened by the feverish anxiety of a gentleman who had accompanied us from Perth, for the purpose of showing, and possibly selling me a mine, in which he had a large interest. All the way up he had dilated enthusiastically upon the richness of this claim, until it seemed to me that it would be almost like daylight robbery to purchase his El Dorado for the few beggarly thousands of pounds he was asking for it. He confessed himself that it was ridiculously cheap, but he was so desirous of my securing at least one first-class property in the Colony, that he did not regret his generosity in parting with it at the price. When we were in the buggy, and the buggy was well on the road across Fly Flat, in the direction of the Empress line of reef, the claim owner fairly exhausted his vocabulary in his attempts to do justice to the mine. He chafed at the delays caused by our easing up to enable us to observe the peculiarities of some of the properties along our route, and miscalled the horses "damned warrigals," because they did not travel quickly enough to please him. He was by no means definite as to the exact location of "The Thistle," as I will call his claim, but it was "further on." We could get nothing more satisfactory out of him, but we went forward for another three miles without coming across it. Then we pulled the horses up, and firmly refused to go another yard unless he could tell us where he wished to get to. Vainly protesting that it was only a few hundred yards "further on," he got down, and we saw him dodging about amongst the scrub, and enquiring of the workmen all around for the missing mine. No one, however, had heard of "The Thistle," and he returned to the buggy, his face blue with the heat and the language he had been indulging in. The idiots in the vicinity could give him no information, he said, but would we drive another half-a-mile, as he was sure it could not be further away than that. We were deaf

A PROMINENT COOLGARDIE JOURNALIST. MR. F. C. B. VOSPER.



HANNAN'S, FROM MOUNT CHARLOTTE.

CAMP LIFE, HANNAN'S

to his entreaties. We said we would see him dead first! There was no gas in him on the return journey, although we endeavoured to cheer him up with the suggestion that a camel may have got loose and eaten his claim—for camels can digest almost anything—or that his manager had sent it to Perth to be assayed, and he would find it safe enough on his office table when he reached home. At dinner-time it occurred to him that his mine might be situated at Hannan's, and not at Coolgardie, and he volunteered to continue the journey with us next morning. There was a rush to catch the early coach on the following day, and when we alighted at Hannan's, he was neither on the outside or inside the vehicle. We thought we had lost him for good, but the next evening he walked into our hotel—travel-stained but cheerful. He had heard that "The Thistle" was situated some eleven miles south of Coolgardie, near the Londonderry, and not to the north-east as he had believed, and would we return with him and inspect it. We thanked him for his thoughtfulness, and the trouble he had taken to give us another chance of securing, what he described as "the pick of the field," but declined the invitation.

That evening, we were treated to the first rain-storm that had visited the district for weeks. As the large tropical rain-drops fell, the sand arose in a cloud, filling the air with the pungent aroma of wet earth, and striking one with an exceeding chilliness. Mingled with the roll of the thunder came the loud boom of dynamite charges being fired in the surrounding mines, and the rain rattled on the iron roofs like peas being shaken in a tin box. Men stood in the wet in the middle of the broad street, to "get the feel of it again." In less than an hour the storm had cleared up, and on the following morning not a sign remained of the downpour of the previous night.

IN MUCH REQUEST.

STAMPS OF THE COLONY

Chapter 7.

The Road to Hannan's (Kalgoorlie)—Laying out a Mining Township—The Employment of Liliputians—The Boy "Bell-Man"—Humours of the Horse Sales—Sir John Forrest at Coolgardie—The Premier at Bay—A Cold Reception and a Warm Farewell—The Premier's Political Career—His Part in the Building of the Coolgardie Railway—His Personal Popularity—Sir John Forrest at Hannan's —He is Bombarded with Deputations—Thrashing Out the Grievances—A Bumper Banquet—The Premier's Triumphs—Homewards Under the Stars.

A CHEERY COACHMAN.

KALGOORLIE (better known as Hannan's, by which name I prefer to call it) is only second to Coolgardie in celebrity among the remarkable gold discoveries of West Australia. The ride to Hannan's is not an inspiring one. The road runs for twenty-eight miles in nearly a straight line, through undulating, sparsely-wooded country that is scorched and dismal. A third of the journey consists of a gradient which is known as the Nine-Mile Hill, and every inhabitant for miles around who owns a buggy, can tell a personal story of how he came to grief on that incline. The track is plentifully sprinkled with outcrops of quartz, and tree trunks rising from one to three feet out of the ground. Fragments of broken buggies lying by the wayside, are eloquent of the difficulties that beset the Jehu at every turn. After nightfall the danger is increased, and even teetotallers—if there be any east of Southern Cross—are powerless to escape the stumps and rucks that conspire to the traveller's undoing. Hannan's is a miniature Coolgardie. It has condensers at its entrance, a three-chain main road, a Stock Exchange, and a club, all on the plan of Coolgardie. There are four hotels, and two local newspapers. Instead of Bayley's Reward, the Great Boulder is the mining Goliath. The stores are large, numerous, and neatly, if not very substantially built. In the minds of the people of Hannan's, hope tells a flattering tale; they are fervent in the belief of the splendid future of the town. As some justification for their faith, they point to the startling prices paid for business sites at the Government land sales.

The town of Hannan's was in the hands of the builders at the time of our visit, and new stores and offices were springing up with marvellous rapidity. New streets were being formed, running parallel and at right angles with the main thoroughfare, for the newest

of these mining townships are laid out on the American system, in which a crooked street has neither place nor part. In width, the main streets are as spacious as a parade ground in India, and twice as dusty.

Hannan's is said to be more central than Coolgardie, looking at the whole of the fields, including Niagara, Menzies, and White Feather, of which great things are expected.

THE MAIN STREET, KALGOORLIE.

Still, Hannan's is no better off than Coolgardie for water for the batteries, and everyone is full of schemes for triumphing over this obstacle—every second man in the town is a modern Moses, ready to make the water gush from the rock. But in these sordid days Moses' rod must be a golden one—which no one appears to possess.

Hannan's adapts itself to circumstances by employing some Liliputians. As there are no pastures for cows, every woman has her goat, which astonishingly produces milk from bark and saplings. Horse feed being scarce and dear, Hannan's is the home of the donkey, who revels on the straw of the grocers' packing-cases. A carter of water to the saw-mill yokes thirteen "neddies," two abreast, to his dray, and they do his work famously on the pickings of the rubbish heaps and dry gum leaves. The donkey is so easy to keep, and so hard to kill, that he is worth a lot of money at Hannan's. The water-carrier says he cannot get enough of them. His turn-out brings to mind pictures of a sledge drawn by a team of Esquimaux dogs. Some of the donkeys are very small, others are of the largest breed, but large or small, they go up to the collar with the courage of a Clydesdale. The waggon and the team are a queer sight. The harness is made up of all kinds of odds and ends, for the saddlers have not sunk so low in their craft as to devote themselves to the fashioning of suits of trappings for donkeys.

THE BELL BOY, KALGOORLIE.

Another example of the versatility of Hannan's is the boy "bell-man." In a place of such dazzling possibilities, the men are all busy with mines or mining speculation. The chief auctioneer, we find, is forced to employ a crier in knickerbockers. The lad atones by his fierce clangour with the bell for the shrill, piping voice in which he makes his deliverances. And the juvenile is not only "bell-man," but also show-man, clerk and ostler all in his own small person. He is a bright-eyed lad, who will make his way in the world. A lad of resource, too, though, like Zacchæus, of short stature, and often lost to sight in the crowd to which he has to exhibit the wares offered for sale by the ruddy-faced man in the box. Not to

THE LAST GLIMPSE OF HANNAN'S.

ALLUVIAL DIGGINGS NEAR HANNAN'S.

be outdone, the youngster tosses up the Crimean shirt, moleskin trousers, or pocket-knife that the people are bidding for, and by his nimble dexterity enables a watchful buyer to inspect the article in glimpses until it is knocked down.

As in Coolgardie, the attendance at the horse and camel sales which are held nearly every day, is always large, and the unemployed section of the inhabitants resort to them as providing the cheapest and pleasantest afternoon's amusement. A diminutive aboriginal of about fourteen summers, who is retained by the auctioneer for the purpose, puts the horses through their paces, and by the aid of a stout stick, and a rough, but effectual, style of horsemanship, he contrives to make each old crock put his or her best foot foremost. With a loud "ger-r-r-up," and a hearty clout with the staff, I have seen many an ancient, broken-winded animal canter down the street like a two-year-old. For the most part, horses go cheap in Hannan's; it is in the item of their up-keep that the luxury becomes expensive. The man who pays five pounds for a horse expects a bit of breeding in his purchase. One grey-haired old tippler, who had been persuaded by his friends to bid up to 35s. for a "blood horse, warranted quiet to ride or drive—a very speedy 'os this, gentlemen, and a sure foal getter" (to quote the auctioneer), refused to accept the lot without a pedigree. "'Ows 'e bred, thash what'r wanter know?" he demanded, and he lurched forward and nearly bit the dust, because he was very drunk indeed. "Quite right, Sir!" responded the obliging knight of the hammer, "bred by Paris III. out of Sister Mary! Here's his pedigree!" and he folded a printed hand-bill and placed it in a foolscap envelope. The old chap paid up 35s., pocketed the envelope, and was with great difficulty hoisted on to the horse. Then the crowd fell back a few yards, and waited for him to tumble off. It was at this particular stage of the proceedings that he disappointed his officious friends. On the ground he was as intoxicated an old ruin as one could meet with, but directly he was mounted, he dug his heels against the horse's ribs, and cantered merrily away along the road to the White Feather, while the crowd gazed after him in open-mouthed astonishment.

IN THE "SUBURBS," KALGOORLIE.

Sir John Forrest arrived at Hannan's a few hours before we did. The Premier showed his characteristic courage in bearding the enemy in his den on the Eastern goldfields. A variety of causes had created an enemy there—in other words, had made the Forrest Government unpopular in the mining districts of the Colony. The very limited franchise was one of the subjects of discontent, the water difficulty another, the disorganisation in the

BROWN HILL CAMP, NEAR HANNAN'S.

THE BUSH, BEYOND HANNAN'S.

Telegraph Department a third. For a long time the ill-will felt towards the Ministry had been actively fomented. The leading members of the Opposition—and among the Opposition is to be found some of the best speaking power of the Legislative Assembly—have canvassed the fields, and trenchantly attacked the Executive. In these party speeches some real cause of complaint had been magnified, and some grievances, for which Sir John Forrest and his colleagues were not responsible, had been laid at their door. The mining population, smarting under evils and shortcomings which were chiefly traceable to the conjuncture of events—to the large and sudden increase of population, the creation of new towns, and the quadrupling of Departmental business—had made loud murmurings heard in Perth. Sir John had been scornfully twitted, during the closing days of last session, with the unfriendly, if not savagely hostile reception he would encounter if he dared to show himself at Coolgardie or Hannan's. He had been tauntingly challenged to visit those strongholds of disaffection. Those who uttered this sneering defiance did not know the man to whom it was addressed, for with all his faults, Sir John Forrest cannot be accused of want of courage. And he lost no time in proving this.

"EVERY WOMAN HAS HER GOAT."

As soon as the Houses had been prorogued, the Premier declared his intention of making an extended tour through the Eastern goldfields. It was nothing to him that Mr. George Leake, the leader of the Opposition; Mr. Illingworth, and Mr. Simpson, the Rupert of debate, and the cleverest satirist in the Lower House; and other members of the party, had been before him; that they had blamed the Government for negligence and incapacity, and had excited the indignation of many thousands of men, who are all the more sensitive of misgovernment because they have no voices at the ballot-box. These men, feeling their interests prejudiced, and their pockets touched by a lack of perfection in the public service, were in an angry mood against the Ministry, whom they regarded as the author of mis-rule. Such was the situation when Sir John Forrest made his preparations for the trip which his opponents had every reason to believe would be full of mortification.

Sir John must have felt that he was at a disadvantage, but he was not dismayed. One of the pet gibes of the Opposition, from the day the Premier took office, has been that West Australia is ruled by a one-man Government, and there is some truth in the cry. The Premier, in his public utterances, has half admitted his enormous preponderance of power. It is the fact, that he is not only the leader, but the dictator of his Cabinet; the other Ministers are more his satellites than his colleagues—that is, that if all the other holders of portfolios were on one side of a question and Sir John Forrest was on the other, Sir John would win the day. The Premier, therefore, was naturally regarded as the head and front of the alleged misdoings of the Government. In going to the goldfields,

A PROSPECTING PARTY, HANNAN'S.

A MID-DAY HALT.

he had to bear the brunt of the aversion of those populous centres, and he was fully aware of the fact.

There was a large and sullen, if not actively hostile crowd outside the Victoria Hotel when Sir John, hot, dusty, and tired after his long ride from Boorabbin, drove up. There were no cheers: there were a few groans and hisses. The travel-stained Premier calmly surveyed his critics without quailing. As soon as he had dined, he asked Coolgardie to state its case, and not to refrain from accusation. His own position he stated in a few clear, courageous words. In brief, he had come to Coolgardie to find out what the Government should do in order that, so far as the requests were reasonable, wrongs might be redressed, and omissions made good. He did not profess that the Government had been immaculate. At the same time, fair allowance should be made for the exceptional circumstances of the Colony. The wonderful turn which had taken place in the fortunes of the Colony, which had created numberless new wants, had disarranged the old order of things. As one who had always sought to serve his country to the best of his ability, he had now, in the height of summer, and at great personal discomfort, travelled to the headquarters of the

HANNAN'S REWARD. IN THE GULLY TO THE RIGHT GOLD WAS FIRST FOUND.

mining settlements on his mission of investigation and enlightenment, with a view to carrying out measures of reform upon his return to the city.

Such a speech, uttered with the bluff straightforwardness of the man who had been thirty years in the public service without a shadow of personal reproach attaching to his name, naturally had a very marked effect. It made friends and disarmed enemies. The most virulent railer could not hiss such a frank address. From that moment the conference between Sir John and the representatives of the various interests of Coolgardie was conducted in a spirit of conciliation, if not of cordiality. The Premier is not the man to promise what he cannot perform, and Coolgardie asked for a great deal. The guarded replies he gave to some requests, the unqualified refusal he gave to one or two others, cooled anything like an approach to enthusiasm; but the longer Sir John was at Coolgardie the more he gained ground. There was no emotional revulsion of feeling in his favour, but there was the steady growth of a sentiment of respect towards him for his manly sincerity—the antithesis of a political trimmer who would win support by dissembling thoughts which

GREAT BOULDER TOWNSHIP.

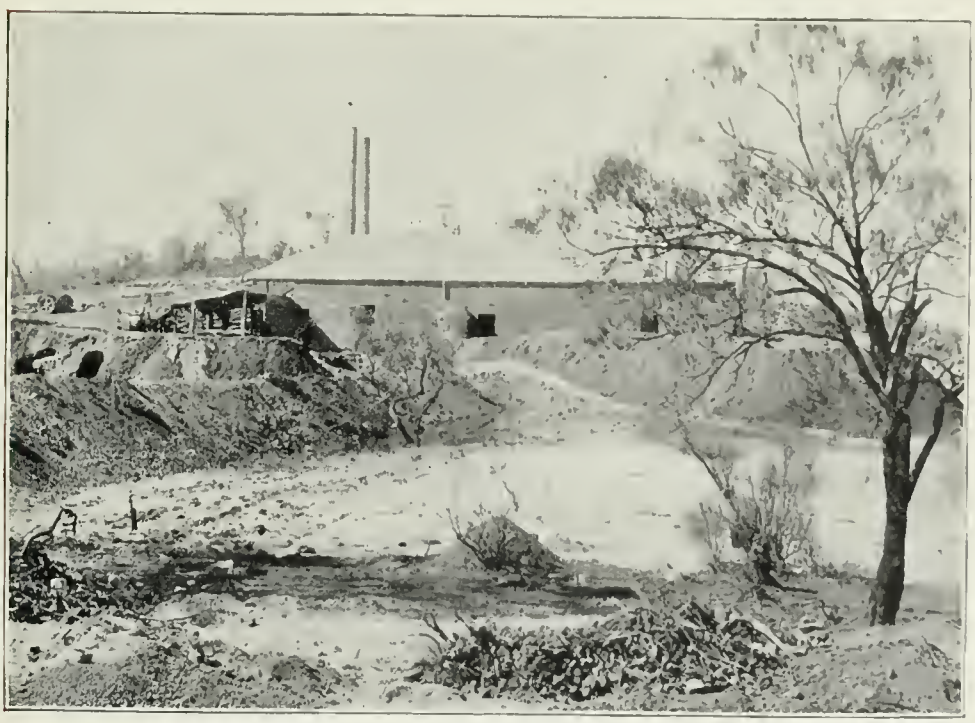
LAKE VIEW BATTERY.

it would be unpalatable to his audience for him to utter. The result was, that when the Premier resumed his seat on the Ministerial four-horse drag, in which it is the fashion for members of the Cabinet to travel beyond the railway routes, the parting with Coolgardie was, on the part of the residents, regardful, if not overflowing with manifestations of goodwill.

While Sir John Forrest's coach is pursuing its dusty way to Hannan's, we may briefly glance at the career of the man who has risen from post to post to be the nearest approach to an autocrat that is to be found holding office under the Constitution in any of the British dominions. The Premier, who is cast in a sturdy mould, was born near Bunbury, a southern port of Western Australia, nearly fifty years ago. He became a surveyor, entered the Civil Service of the Colony, and was despatched with his brother, Alexander Forrest, on several exploring expeditions, in which he acquitted himself with characteristic resolution and success. Having done all, and more than all, that he had been commissioned to do, his opportunity came when, a little over five years ago, Western Australia was granted self-government. By general consent, Sir John (then Mr.) Forrest was chosen to be the leader of the first Ministry under the new Constitution, and knighthood soon followed. From that day to this the Forrest Government has never been seriously menaced by any vote of the Assembly; the career of the Cabinet has been associated with a record of progress and prosperity throughout the country. Of course, the Opposition say that the goldfields, not the Government, have made the Colony prosperous, by swelling the revenue and attracting population. According to these detractors, the Ministry has been rather more lucky than wise, meaning that what has appeared to be the result of the most sagacious foresight, has been due to the auspicious trend of fortuitous circumstances. The Southern Cross Railway is pointed to in support of this reasoning. The history of the line is interesting. When gold was found at Southern Cross, the Government hastened to make a railway to that field. The work was a very large undertaking for the Colony in its then struggling position. The outlay was viewed with some concern, but by the time the contract was completed, Coolgardie was in the mouths of all men. Nothing could have been more fortunate than that the rails had been extended from Northam to Southern Cross, an important link of communication with the great mining centre. But meanwhile Southern Cross had so far failed to fulfil expectations, that but for the attractions of Coolgardie, the Southern Cross line would have blemished instead of improved the reputation of the

TEMPORARY PREMISES.

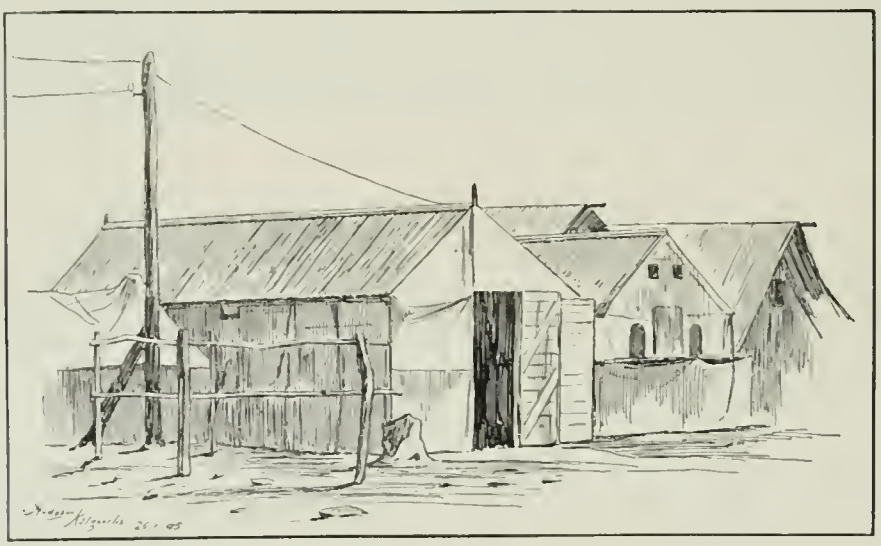
THE GREAT BOULDER COUNTRY.



GREAT BOULDER AND LAKE VIEW BATTERY.

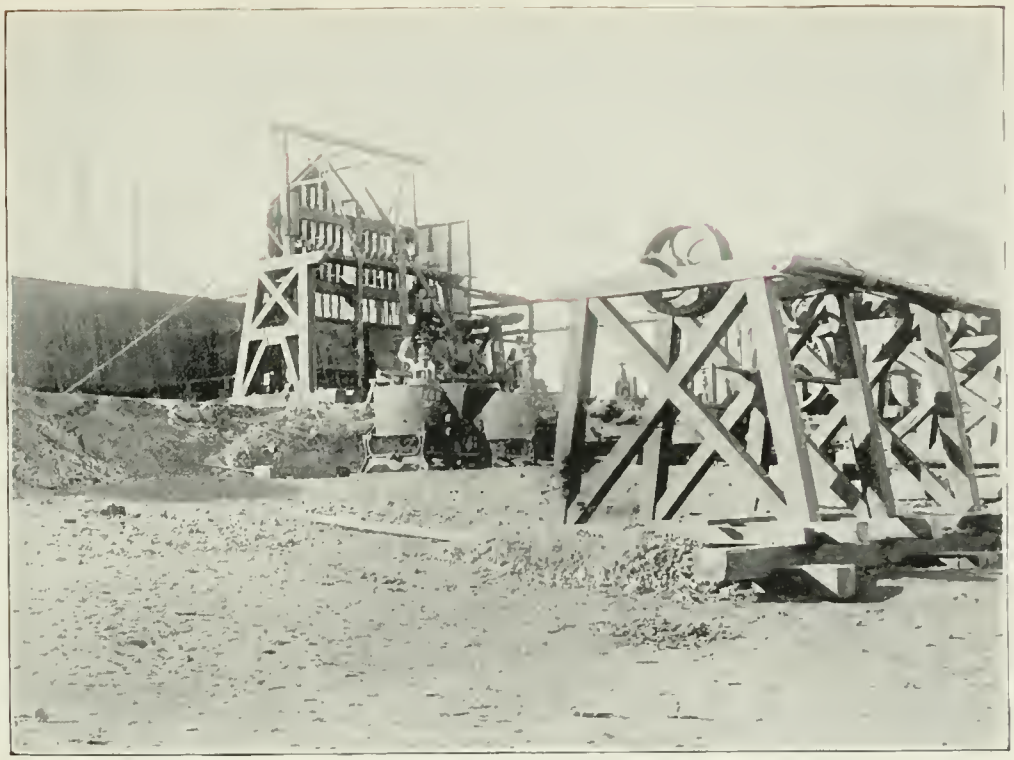
Government. And so it has been with Sir John's record as a Treasurer, whose estimates have always been exceeded owing to the uninterrupted succession of good years. Had the slightest check occurred, had gold district after gold district not been discovered, had Bayley's Reward not been eclipsed by the Great Boulder and Niagara, securing for West Australia world-wide renown, Sir John as a financier would have fallen, like Lucifer, never to rise again. As it is, he enjoys the kind of reputation that belongs to a general who has never lost a battle, and by the great majority of the people who do not analyse cause and effect too closely, Sir John is regarded as the safest and wisest of guides. Of course, he has his censors, as all public men have. A plebiscite, if it were taken on the question, would show that the Premier is not only the most powerful, but that he is also the most popular man in the country.

Sir John is popular, in spite of some faults which usually tell greatly against personal popularity. He has none of the arts of a courtier, none of the grace of a Chesterfield, who,



FIRST POST OFFICE, HANNAN'S.

it is said, could refuse a favour with such an inimitable charm of manner as to make a suppliant feel that he had received one. The Premier's style is bluff, if not brusque. He speaks straight to the point, and does not care to conceal a sense of boredom under a gracious mask. He always reminds one of Othello, whose dearest action had been in the tented field, and who had none of those "soft parts of speech that clamberers have." But his chief failing as leader of the Legislative Assembly is that he has none of the imperturbable self-control, none of the cynical disregard of attack, which have done so much to make the Attorney-General, Mr. Septimus Burt, a strong man in public life. Mr. Burt is always good-humoredly cool in parrying the thrusts of an assailant. He retorts with a pungency that is as biting as vitriol, and smiles all the time as winningly as though he were using the honeyed language of compliment. The Opposition is chary of provoking such an adversary; after feeling his claws, they are fond of letting him alone.



THE GREAT BOULDER STAMPERS.

OPENING THE GREAT BOULDER BATTERY.

The Premier, on the other hand, is, to use a vernacular phrase, "easily drawn." He has no fortitude when the darts fly thickly. As they strike him he winces visibly, and as soon as he gets an opportunity for reprisal, he goes for a close grapple with more courage sometimes than discretion, like a wounded bear charging upon the huntsmen. When such a man is high in public esteem, that esteem is a high tribute to his probity and his zeal for the country's welfare. Some men win the goodwill of their fellows by subtlety, knowledge of human nature, a veneer of elegance; Sir John Forrest has hewn out his place in the affections of the people solely by the strength of a character which is as rugged on the surface as an uncut gem.

It was a field-day at Hannan's when the Premier arrived. The formulation of wrongs and the setting out of requirements, had been the work of weeks on the part of the

INSPECTING SPECIMENS.

Municipal Council, the brokers, the mine-owners, the working miners, and the merchants. The Petition of Right had not nearly as many clauses as the list of resolutions, requisitions and remonstrances. The whole of a Saturday afternoon was given up to fusillading the Premier with this paper ammunition. The largest room in the town was the besieging place. It was the "social hall" of one of the hotels, and it was crammed to the doors. A few seats were provided on the platform, the floor was bare, and for nearly four hours the people stood in the thick press and the sultry air, listening with the closest attention to the most important conference that had ever been held in the youthful settlement. For a wonder, too, hats were doffed. In Australia, even in the cities, to say nothing of the gold-fields where ruder manners are in vogue, it is customary for the free and independent voter to keep his hat on while his support is being solicited, but in honour of the august meeting

AURIFEROUS COUNTRY NEAR THE GREAT BOULDER.

CLAIM NEAR THE GREAT BOULDER.

at Hannan's there was a politer code. There was not even any smoking, and not a single adjournment for drinks; the police trooper on duty had not to eject a disturber; the meeting was too earnest to be on any but its best behaviour. Sir John, it was clear, from the formidable pile of papers displayed by the representatives of the various bodies, had a heavy task before him under the glowing roof of the densely-packed building, but he looked resolute enough for any trial of his stamina. Beside him sat the youthful-looking Mayor of Hannan's, who well deserves the confidence of the burghers. A solicitor, apparently not more than twenty-eight years of age, but wearing no tell-tale beard or moustache to disclose the number of his birthdays, Mr. Wilson has done the State some service in his responsible position. A man of quick parts, he has proved himself skilful in public business, and he has been the frequent and successful advocate for Government expenditure in the town. Instead of caballing against the Ministry, he had forcibly appealed to them to help the Council to help keep Hannan's in a sanitary condition. The Government responded by forwarding a grant of £2,000 to pay for the work. It is evident that Sir John and the Mayor sitting beside him, whose slight frame throws into relief the burly proportions of the Knight, believe in each other. The Mayor makes an alert and diplomatic chairman, and at the close of the long meeting the Premier takes the opportunity of congratulating Hannan's upon having so able a president.

Mr. Moran, the most talkative member of the Legislative Assembly, had the first say. All through the session which has just closed he had roared himself hoarse by depicting the ruin that was staring West Australia in the face if the mines were not supplied with abundance of water, and now that he was speaking before his constituents on the same subject, he ran on in turgid flights of sesquipedalian sentences. As he put it, it would be not merely mal-administration; it would be outrageous for the Government to fail in their duty to the goldfields. Of course, the ways and means of doing what is to the ablest of engineers a perplexing task, is to Mr. Moran, a broker, as simple as shelling peas, for he is one of the men who would preach at St. Paul's, perform the operation for stone, or take command of the Channel Fleet at ten minutes notice. The solution of the problem Mr. Moran was munificently willing to make a present to the Public Water Works Department. His plan was to cut a large dam in the bed of a neighbouring lake, and catch the rainfall in it. When the lake became full, the Department would not only be recouped for the cost of making the dam, but, from the sale of the water, would derive a handsome revenue. Sir John saw only two fatal objections to the ingenious scheme which Mr. Moran, who is an oracle upon every subject under the sun, so glibly propounded. The average rainfall of the district would never fill the dam, and even if a deluge should miraculously come, the water would be useless, as the bed of the lake was salt, and would make brine of all the rain that was caught in it. So, after hearing the promise of the Premier, that careful consideration of the question of water supply should be given, the meeting passed on to deal with the next item on the programme.

Happily, the topic found Sir John in perfect agreement with his petitioners. They complained of the inefficiency of the Telegraph Department, and the Premier, in admitting the fact, enlivened the proceedings by giving some humorous experiences of his own and of his friends, to prove that in West Australia electricity is sometimes slower than a coach-

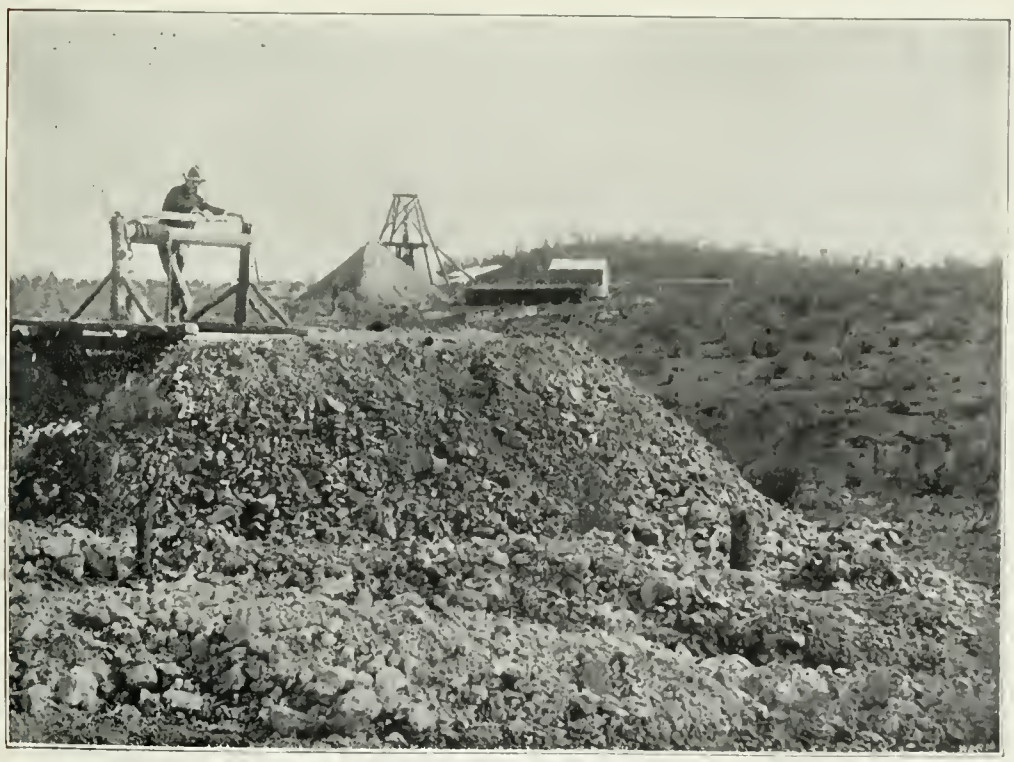
A PROMISING CLAIM AT HANNAN'S.

THE MOUNT BURGESS MINE, HANNAN'S

horse. The demand for schools touched another sympathetic chord. It was painful, Sir John said, for him to hear that children were growing up in any part of the Colony without the advantages of education. The State ought to place at least a rudimentary education within the reach of every boy and girl, and in fulfilment of this duty a school would forthwith be erected at Hannan's. The neglected state of the cemetery, which was deplored in another requisition, evoked a more feeling reply from the Minister than many people would have expected, for the Premier is not prone to exhibit anything like the melting mood. But when he was told that the resting-place of the dead was without a fence, that, indeed, it was a piece of waste bush-land, he touched a pathetic note in which a gentle rebuke was mingled. It grieved him, he said, to hear that the people of Hannan's needed to apply to the Treasury for the means of paying respect to the remains of those pioneers who had fallen by the way. It might have been thought that those men who had braved the early hardships of the field, and had been stricken down, would have been "freshly remembered," and their graves tended and enclosed. But since the matter had been brought under his notice, he would see that "God's acre" should no longer remain a desert spot. Two requests of the working miners were encouragingly responded to. The first concession asked for was that the fee for a miner's right should be reduced; the second, that the men should be entitled to take up free residential blocks on Crown lands near the mines upon which they were employed. The Premier hinted that he saw some difficulties in the latter proposal, although he would give it his attention. For example, supposing it were admitted that a miner who went to reside on a field before a township was proclaimed, should be permitted to claim as his residential block the site where he had originally pitched his tent, and when the town came to be surveyed the tent should be found to be standing on a valuable business front to the main street. Then again, in the event of a miner's death or departure from a district, were his heirs or himself, as the case might be, to have the right of receiving a transfer of the residential privileges of the working miner? While a pioneer might be considered to deserve to live free of ground rent, was it not too much to expect that he should be given the absolute ownership of an allotment that might be very valuable? Possession was one thing; the right to dispose of the real estate for profit might be more difficult. In the latter case, the Crown would lose an asset, and might be charged with creating an invidious departure from

DRY BLOWING.

LEVIATHAN BATTERY, HANNAN'S.



MOUNT CHARLOTTE, HANNAN'S.

the ordinary rule. In other words, would not the people who found it necessary to purchase residential blocks have some reason to grumble if gifts of such property were made to any class in the community? Yet the matter was one to which further thought would be given, as he recognised that the miner was an important factor in the development of the national wealth.

The conference had opened auspiciously. So far there had been nothing to call for the display of Sir John's ability to tell people unpalatable things plainly to their faces. The opportunity came upon the franchise question, which is the root of most of the miners' ill-will towards the Government. The gist of their grievance is that they are taxed without having votes—in a word, that the electoral evils of Western Australia are worse than those of England prior to the passing of the Reform Bill. It is easy to prove this charge up to the hilt. In the first place, the discovery of gold has greatly altered the distribution of population in the Colony. Districts which used to be among the most populous, are now insignificant hamlets compared with Coolgardie; other districts, which never had a large population, now more than ever resemble Old Sarum in sending representatives to the Legislative Assembly on the votes of a few widely-scattered electors. The state of the law almost passes belief. The spectacle is presented of large masses of English subjects having no more voice in Parliament than if they were slaves of colour under the old regime of the South American plantations. If this statement is regarded as an exaggeration, let the facts be examined. There is only one Parliamentary member for Coolgardie, meaning only one member for Coolgardie, Hannan's, Menzies, Black Flag, Broad Arrow, White Feather, Niagara, and Lake Darlot. In this electorate, which, territorially-speaking, is the largest in the world, there is a population of able-bodied men one-fourth as large as the entire population of the Colony. The injustice is luridly revealed and emphasized when it is remembered that in other districts less than forty pastoralists or pearlers have sent a member to the Assembly, so that in West Australia forty men have had as much political power as twenty thousand. The serious anomalies in the representation of the Colony are, no doubt, partly due to the sudden up-springing of populous mining centres, but a feeling of prejudiced provincialism has, it must be confessed, still more to do with them. The old West Australian is jealous of political power, and means to keep it as long as he can against the encroachments of "t'othersiders." It has been made a slow and complex process for a new-comer to get a vote. From the thought of manhood suffrage, the Government, or any of their old West Australian supporters, would recoil with horror. The Electoral Act requires that a man shall reside in a district for six months before being entitled to a vote, so that a migratory class like the miners find it very difficult to qualify themselves for registration. Moreover, after fulfilling the residence condition, a man has to apply for registration, according to a certain form, at a certain place, within a stated time, or his residence goes for nothing. To prospectors or miners, who were moving about looking for reefs or employment, and who know little of red-tape formula, or the mysteries of the Circumlocution Office, the acquisition of a vote under the recondite provisions of the statute was, in many cases, merely an irritating possibility. As a rule, the miners were allured by the shadow; the substance proved as elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp. Meanwhile, the gold-fields felt that they were being heavily taxed, while they were practically disenfranchised, for

CAMEL TEAM.

KALGOORLIE GOLD MINING COMPANY'S LEASE.

they produce nothing but gold. All that they eat or wear, every luxury enjoyed or used, with the exception of sugar, tea, and kerosene oil, has to pay large toll at the Customs House, and even the local railway rates were raised to a penal rate. It is not surprising, therefore, that for years before the visit of the Premier, the people should have smarted under the belief that they were in a kind of electoral bondage. They knew that, according to the rights of Englishmen, they ought to be able to make their voices heard in the Legislature; they ought to have votes, and they had not got them. As a matter of equity, no less than of birthright, they knew that they were being harshly treated. It was natural, then, that the question of the franchise should have become a burning one on the fields. In the mood of injured men, the people had looked forward to confronting Sir John Forrest.

The attitude of the Premier had done much to sharpen the determination of the residents of the goldfields to press home their demands for electoral reform. Sir John, never an adept in finesse or diplomacy, had not, as leader of the Legislative Assembly, or as the head of the Government, exhibited much sympathy with the sensitive feeling of the goldfields touching the franchise. He had been too prone to regard as sentimental the anxiety of those districts to return a fair number of members, because, in his opinion, additional members could not do more for the fields than the Forrest Ministry was doing, and was willing to do. "What," he used to indignantly exclaim, in reply to Mr. Simpson or Mr. Illingworth, "do the goldfields want? There is no reasonable thing that they can ask for that the Government would not exert itself to grant. Is not the railway being made? Is not the water supply engaging our earnest attention, and involving an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds? Are not taxes on tea, sugar, iron, and kerosene being remitted, in order to lighten the miner's cost of living? What else is required? Let it be named, and the Government will consider it." "The hon. member for Nannine" (Mr. Illingworth), protested Sir John on one occasion, "only desires to harass the Government by quoting statistics to show the electoral basis of the Colony. Can Coolgardie expect in a day to get equal electoral representation with the older settled portions of the Colony? Has Coolgardie not grown up so quickly that its population but yesterday did not belong to West Australia?" And in one of those moments of irritation, which have done so much to make his political path less smooth or triumphant than it might otherwise have been, the Premier continued—"These people have come here only to make money; when they have made it they will go elsewhere to spend it. Let them prove that they are citizens of West Australia, that their interests are identified with ours, before they clamour for more privileges at the ballot-box."

A MINER SPEAKS. I SAY THIS ADVISEDLY."

The taunt, it will be admitted, was not the way to hold out the olive-branch, not the way to soften the resentment of men who really were fighting in a good cause. But Sir John Forrest had no sense of chivalry; he never was the man to recognise that for a battle cry. For a mere sentiment of freedom, for the throwing off of a thraldom that existed in little more than name, men have faced the carnage and the devastation of war with enthusiasm. To him it was amazing that the fields should not rest, and be thankful. Were they

WHITE FEATHER.

STREET IN WHITE FEATHER.

not beneficently ruled by the Forrest Government? Were not life and property protected by the laws and by the police? What, then, did the miners want with votes, or the choosing of their own representatives? Sir John is, in fact, a thorough utilitarian. "Can honour heal a wound?" asks Falstaff. A fig for the Briton's birthright of a vote, for the outcry that there should be no taxation without representation, says Sir John. To him the demands of the miners were as the murmurings of the children of Israel against Moses, their benefactor. In other words, the repinings partook of the nature of folly and ingratitude; at best, the protests were wasteful of time and force, while there was plenty of better work for energy to expend itself upon.

On the other hand, the mining population, in noting the events of the session, attributed to Sir John a selfish motive in so lightly dismissing their agitation that they should be able to make their voices heard in the Councils of the State. To them his flippant disregard of their wishes appeared like a device to stave off the defeat of his Government. Or, if he were not concerned on his own behalf, it at least looked as though he wanted to postpone as long as possible the overthrow of the old West Australians, who, until the infusion of new blood took place, had nothing to stir them out of the even tenor of their way. With the eager, active new-comers, and their up-to-date notions of how to make a country, the old stock have little in common. On the other hand, the immigrants looked half amusedly, half contemptuously, upon a people and a Colony that are what is known as behind the times. Their feelings may be likened to that of a Londoner who is entertaining his country cousin. The rustic and his city relative seldom coalesce in their views of men and things. Neither did the West Australian and the gold-seekers, who were bent on taking the lead, while the old stock were just as determined to keep the interloper in political subjection. Under the existing electoral law, the power must belong to the native for a time, no matter how he might be outnumbered. He was loth to surrender his advantage, which was symbolised in the existence of the Forrest Government. The Premier is a native, and if all his colleagues were not born in the Colony, they are so closely associated with it by long residence and commercial and domestic interests, as to be within the pale "as natives by adoption." The "t'othersiders," as they grew in strength, and found their political voices gagged, became prone to regard the Forrest Ministry as the embodiment of class interests, and they yearned to have a day of reckoning at the polls.

From the foregoing, it will have been seen that when the meeting at Hannan's approached the subject of the franchise, Sir John Forrest and his auditors were quite aware that they were treading on dangerous ground. The miners, who were without votes, and the Minister, who had shown no anxiety to give them votes, were at length face to face. The hour had arrived which the Opposition had taunted the Premier with being afraid to encounter. The proceedings at this stage were "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." In the hush of an impressive silence, the first speaker rose to espouse the cause of the franchise. On behalf of the people of Hannan's, he asked that they should be given equal Parliamentary representation with other districts. He asked this as the right of taxpayers and of citizens. They could not be expected to quietly submit to the present grossly unequal allocation of seats in the Legislative Assembly, which was emphasized by some startling figures which he would read.

HOSPITAL AND STAFF, WHITE FEATHER.

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE GROUP, WHITE FEATHER.

The Premier rose to reply with more self-command than he usually exhibited at a critical time in the Legislative Assembly. He knew that more was meant than had been expressed, but he looked his accusers in the face, and spoke in his plain, blunt fashion, without seeking, by means of plausible promises, to curry favour in the hostile camp. With the exception of saying that he did not remember having described the mining men as mere birds of passage, he substantially repeated all that he had said in his place in the Legislative Assembly upon the franchise question. The numerical basis, he contended, was not the only one upon which the popular representative Chamber could be created in an enormous, sparsely-settled country like Western Australia. On the numerical basis, a number of old-established pastoral and agricultural centres would be electorally obliterated, and the fields would be given a preponderance of members beyond all precedent, or just balance of power. The Colony must not be ruled by the goldfields' interest, or by any other single interest. The Legislature must hold the scales as fairly as possible between all interests. After all, it did not much matter whether each goldfield had its own member or not; the Government was so anxious to do the best for the fields, with whose welfare the prosperity of the Colony was bound up, that every Minister was virtually a miners' member. But granting that there ought to be more electorates in the auriferous area, Perth and Fremantle, which had of late largely increased their population, must also be given additional representation, so that under a new Electoral Act the voting power of the Assembly would be pretty much the same as it was now. It was possible, therefore, for the gold centres to exaggerate the importance of a re-adjustment of seats; which, however, in view of the large revenue derived from the fields, might be contemplated by the Government.

Sir John's reply broke the ice. A thaw began to set in, but what threatened to be a hard frost now took place. A spokesman of the Association of Working Miners asked that the holder of a miner's right should be entitled to vote at any polling-booth upon production of the right. In support of the request, he said that miners were such an unsettled class, that to require each man to vote only in a certain district was tantamount to saying that many of them should not vote at all. As the speaker made his meaning clear, Sir John's face became set into an expression of strong disapproval, and when he rose to give his answer, a more uncompromising negative could not have been uttered by a public man. His objections to the proposal were as plentiful as blackberries, and each one as it was stated seemed to him to be more convincing than the last. First of all, the system would open the door to corruption. It would enable the election agent to pack a district with bogus voters. Men who were not miners at all could take out miners' rights, and be driven in van-loads to the scene of a closely-contested election to vote against the interests of the local residents. But there was another reason why miners' rights ought not to give the privilege of a vote. A right costs ten shillings; many a man who was entitled to a vote was not prepared to pay half-a-sovereign to get one, nor should he have to do so. As the law stood, a voter could register his name on the roll for one shilling. All he had to do was to fill up a very simple form, if he possessed the necessary qualification, and get the declaration witnessed. Any Justice of the Peace was competent to attest the document; there need not be any trouble about it. "I will fill up forms for anyone," added Sir John, adroitly. The offer not only disarmed ill-will, but was a good move to

DIGGER'S CAMP, WHITE FEATHER.

PROSPECTORS AND NATIVES, WHITE FEATHER.

enrol votes that only an ingrate would use against the Forrest Government. There was the ghost of a cheer.

The banquet, held on the evening of the same day, was very largely attended by representatives of the Municipal Council and the mining and commercial interests. In proposing the health of the guest of the evening, the Mayor, who presided, said that just as Mr. Cecil Rhodes was the strong man of the Cape, Sir John Forrest was the strong man of West Australia. On rising to respond, the Premier was very well received. After confessing that he had not expected to receive so cordial a welcome, he went on to speak of the wonderful progress the town had made, and to forecast for it a splendid future. The Government, in spite of animadversion, had been watchful of the growing greatness of Hannan's. It could not be truthfully gainsaid, Sir John maintained, that the Government deserved the good-will of the mining interest, especially in the matter of railway communication. The line would be continued from Coolgardie to Hannan's without delay. No doubt it was easy for the critics of the Ministry at this time of day to perceive the wisdom of the progressive railway policy of the Government. What he claimed credit for was that the Ministry had had the foresight to make the line to Southern Cross at a time that public opinion was hardly ripe for the carrying out of that work. As one who had lived for twenty years under canvas, he thoroughly sympathised with the hardships of the miner. Hannan's might rest assured that the Government would leave nothing undone for the encouragement of those who, so far from the capital, were helping to lay broad and deep the foundations of the remarkable prosperity of the Colony. There should be no divisions, no class animosities, between the new and the old population of the Colony; as fellow-subjects, and for the most part men of the same race—the race which had made the British Empire—they should cordially unite their energies towards the one object—the weal of Western Australia, in which they were making homes for themselves and their children. The last words of Sir John's stirring address were followed by a great burst of cheering, the waving of handkerchiefs, and the rising of the whole company to their feet. The speech—of which only the briefest index has been given—was, in some respects, the speech of Sir John Forrest's life. When he is not replying to an opponent he is generally cool in tone, and sometimes hesitating in delivery, but for once he spoke with a warm glow, for the moment he caught something like a gleam of the inspiration of an orator. If he could always rise to the same level in his addresses, he would be a born leader of men, but, like Single-Speech Hamilton, he has made only one memorable effort. That he has never manifested the same degree of power is, perhaps, due to the fact that he has never had cause to be so deeply moved. At Hannan's he had triumphed over his adversaries who had predicted his humiliation, and the revulsion of feeling unloosed his tongue.

Then we had the toasts of the "Mining Interest," the "Town of Coolgardie," the "Press," the "Visitors," and some half-dozen beside; and in conclusion, the Premier proposed the health of "my friend, the Mayor," and the Mayor thanked "my friend, the Premier," for his condescension. Then we joined hands all round and united our voices in "Auld Lang Syne." Our loyalty bubbled over again when "God save the Queen" was reached, and the next hour was spent in trying to slip away before another round of drinks was called for. One by one the diners straggled away from the bar, and disappeared along

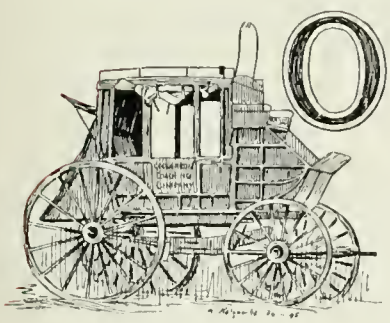
ALLUVIAL DIGGINGS, WHITE FEATHER.

WHITE FEATHER REWARD.

the broad street. The township slept quietly under the stars, footfalls were deadened by the thick sand, the breeze wailed dismally through the surrounding scrub, and the lightning flashed and glinted continuously along the dark horizon, foretelling the approaching storm that never came.

Chapter 8.

Saturday Evening at Hannan's—The Salvation Army Meeting, the Dog Fight, and the "Open Exchange"—Bars and Billiards—Tidying up to Advantage—An Aboriginal Artist—Camels on the Fields—An Ingenious Registrar—The Meat Supply.



THE HANNAN'S COACH.

OF all nights in the week at Hannan's, Saturday is *the* night. The main street is thronged with people. Every miner from all the camps for ten miles round the town finds his way there to spend a social hour. The hotels and the shooting-galleries have plenty of patrons. The band of the Salvation Army is there, too, but shrunken to a cornet, a tambourine, and a big drum. There are only four "soldiers," and no "lassies." The torch-bearer is a white-haired man, whose venerable appearance is strongly revealed under the ruddy glow of the flaring tow in the grease-pot. The "captain" is a young man of intense fervour. His devotion to his work burns to a white heat. In his pious frenzy he is lost to a consciousness of everything except the sin of the world and the need of perishing souls. The goldfields are to him a sink of iniquity, and he calls sinners to repentance with terrible earnestness. He is on his knees pouring out a cry to heaven, when suddenly two large dogs begin a savage fight close to the big drum. The crowd is delighted; a dog-fight is the best of diversion in a mining camp, where there is seldom any more exciting sport than a game of billiards. The animals are loudly incited to tear each other's throats, and the yells and hisses heighten the ferocity of the animals. They roll over and over each other, snapping and clawing for a death-hold, against the knees of the praying "captain." Now the black dog is uppermost, now the yellow one, growling, tearing, blood and hair flying. The dogs are flashing their teeth right under the "captain's" nose, but his thoughts are far away. He goes on praying as devoutly as if he were in a cloistered aisle. He knows nothing of the shouting crowd, the maddened brutes, the gleaming teeth, which play about him like the lightning flash. He is looking at the Celestial Throne, and when the long, desperate worry is over, and the yellow dog takes staggeringly to his heels, the kneeling "captain" is beseeching still.

The "open exchange" is characteristic of the free-and-easy life of the goldfields, where every man is a law unto himself, so long as he keeps the peace. Any man may set up his trade on the footpath without let or hindrance. The police have neither lock-up accommodation, nor the desire to be officious. They know nothing of the 'move-on clause," nor any obstruction of the thoroughfare short of violence. It seems to be understood that municipal laws for the proper control of the streets will come into vogue by-and-bye, when Hannan's gets the benefit of clergy. For the present, if minor trespasses and sins were to be noticed, half the population would be before the Mayor's court on Monday. Up-to-date, you can be "drunk and disorderly" with impunity, so long as you do not get dangerously riotous in your cups, without having a friend to call a hand-cart to take you home. As for the "open exchange" in the middle of the crowded main street on Saturday night, it is an honoured institution. What does it matter if the people who want to buy their Sunday's dinner are elbowed off the footpath, and the man who is paying a high rent for his store is jostled out of his customers? All hail to the "exchange," the disciple of the mining interest, which is the idol of the town! The pavement stock-broker takes the full licence of the place. He sets up a torch on the side-walk, roars himself hoarse, collects a crowd and chokes the "gangway." The stock-in-trade of one of these roaring hawkers of scrip, consists of a strident voice and a good knowledge of the ruling rates of stock. The transactions are conducted on something of the Dutch auction principle; a start is made by the operator announcing that he has a buyer for Devonshires at 49/-, a seller at 65/-. Then he demands to know whether there is a better buyer or a lower seller. He asks the question, perhaps, ten or a dozen times —each time more impatiently than before—until, perhaps, the buyer will advance 2/6, and the seller will abate 2/6 of the original offer. The public is given the option of claiming the shares. If there is no response, the seller will, perhaps, make another abatement, and the buyer another advance, until a bargain is closed. Sometimes, after ten minutes' chaffering, and a surprising lot of lung power has been expended, no business is done in the line of stock submitted. The practitioner, lamenting that he cannot live on air, dejectedly passes the lot that has failed to elicit a favourable bid, but immediately afterwards he sings the praises of another mine on his list, with most enthusiastic vigour. The parcels of stock dealt with by these peripatetic brokers are generally small, and the pavement man certainly works hard for the few shillings of commission, which, to use a sporting phrase, are his end of the purse. After the quotations of stocks have been got through, there are usually more excited dealings in what are known as "interests." The preamble is usually something like this: "Now, gentlemen, I have to offer you the chance of a lifetime, a sixteenth share in the Royal Mint. The property adjoins the Crown Bullion Mine, and there is no doubt that the rich lead found in the Bullion runs through the ground described in the lease secured by my clients. The vendor holds one quarter of the property, which

A DRY BLOWER

SANDAL WOOD CAMP, DUNNVILLE

THE FIRST SPORTS HELD IN BANDOCH, 1895.

consists of twenty acres. He would not part with a fraction of his interest, only that he wants to get to Perth to arrange for the development of the reef. Now, understand me, gentlemen, nothing has been done on the reef except knocking a bit off the cap for dollying, and the prospect has turned out well. But here is the lease which will show you what you are buying. You all know the locality better than I can tell you. This sixteenth interest that I offer you may be a fortune; plenty of shows that looked no better on the surface have been a fortune, but I only want a fair deal. I tell you that the reef has not been opened up. I only vouch for the lease having been issued, and for the number of acres contained in it, and where the ground is situated. The rest depends upon the luck of mining. You will use your own judgment. For this sixteenth interest I want £60. Who will give me £60?" After a pause the best bid is £15. The vendor drops his demand to £50. The bidder advances to £18. By slow degrees the parties come to terms. The impecunious part-proprietor of the Royal Mint gets £25 for his sixteenth share from some one in the crowd, who, from the eagerness with which he produces his deposit, seems to be well satisfied with his investment. It is now getting late; the thick ranks of the strollers in the streets begin to thin. Here and there in the tents among the trees which fringe the town, a candle is lit. There are shadows on the white walls, till the owner of the tent has turned in upon the stretcher made of saplings and corn sacks, and then there is darkness. If some wayfarer, overcome by the heat and by the convivial glass, camps upon the ground before he reaches his bunk, there is not much fear of ague. Sleeping out in these semi-tropical parts of West Australia, where it has not rained for months, and will not rain for months again, is, drunk or sober, one of the secrets of rising with a clear head in the morning.

AN OPEN CALL, HANNAN'S.

The people of Hannan's have the greatest faith in their town. The pretentious club premises that are its principal architectural feature, is an evidence of their great expectations. The club-house, which is a commodious brick building, was about half erected when we were shown over it. The resources of the establishment are to be replete with every attainable luxury, to make the life of the social Briton worth living in the far West. In the arid desert, baths, billiards, and iced drinks, are unspeakable blessings, which thrill the hardest heart. Hannan's, like Coolgardie, is full of pioneers, who have no affinity with the bushman type. The mails bring them the

THE NECESSARY SPECTACLES.

latest English and American magazines, and letters with superscriptions in scholarly hands. Culture is not banished where civilization is only beginning to rear her head. There are many men there who dress in a coarse flannel shirt and trousers, but whose bearing and speech are that of educated gentlemen.

THE DEMANDS OF CIVILISATION.

Hannan's is noisy, with the sound of the hammer and the saw. Many buildings are going up, but with the exception of the club, they are merely flimsy barns of sheet iron and timber. The scarcity of labour, the cost of cartage, the haste of the owners to open their stores and hotels, are all in favour of the use of galvanised iron. It is easily carried by the waggons; it covers cheaply a great deal of surface; it is waterproof, and it lasts a long time. Of course, galvanised iron warms up like an oven in the sun, but it cools as soon as the sun goes down. "There is nothing like iron," is therefore the view of those who want to quickly get a big rent from their business sites, but a street lined with galvanised iron structures is a horrible infliction to the artistic sense. By daylight the view is as ugly as a gaol wall. The mail-clad buildings are only tolerable at night. When the moon's silvery beams hide their deformity, one could wish that the garish light of day would never come to destroy the illusive picture. Max O'Rell, when he was leaving Australia, said he yearned to go back to where he could see an old wall with a bit of ivy growing on it—a remark which so plaintively expresses a reverence for the beautiful, that I am glad that the witty Frenchman was spared the infliction of seeing a goldfields' town in Western Australia. Such a town is an architectural nightmare.

There are several large hotels at Hannan's, and some of them are not large enough. As we write, the Commercial is being doubled in size. Every night the dining-room is made into a large dormitory, while the bed-rooms hold as many sleepers as there is room to place beds. It would be a deep purse indeed, that could hire a single or a double bedded room at Hannan's. All the hotels have billiard tables, and plenty of novices want to play on them. After seeing matches in all the principal mining places in Western Australia, I feel bound to say that all the tyros of the cue in the universe, seemed to be turned loose in pursuit of new Eldorados. The form of the players is almost uniformly so execrable that nearly as many points are scored for an opponent's misses as for the making of a cannon, or the pocketing of a ball. When a game of

OUTSIDE A HUMPY AT CHRISTMAS.

"fifty up" is started, the players you may be sure have taken a lease of the table for half the night. A break of five would be a surprising feat, and a run of ten would probably lead to the marvellous performer being carried shoulder high in triumph to the bar.

The host of the Commercial had an agreeable experience during our short stay at his house. On a Sunday morning, having no church to go to, he, heedful of the precept that cleanliness is next to godliness, began to tidy up his yard as a respectful tribute to the sanctity of the Lord's Day. Some lumps of quartz, which had been brought in by some prospectors who had lodged at the hotel, were lying about, and he picked them up to make cobble-stones for his stable. One of them, on being thrown down into its place, struck a larger stone, and a fragment was chipped off, exposing a streak of the precious yellow metal, which the innkeeper, who is an old prospector, had often sought in vain, throughout many a weary day's march. A heavy hammer soon broke the quartz into pieces the size of hen's eggs, and every blow revealed thick veins of gold, and frosted pieces of it bulging from the fractures. The lucky finder not being wealthy enough to pave his stable with gold, picked up his cobble-stones and transferred them to his safe. The house did a great trade that day, although it was Sunday. As soon as the discovery was noised abroad, there was a general desire on the part of the people of Hannan's to see the specimens, which made a display pretty enough to grace the plate-glass of a Regent Street jeweller. Of course, every one wanted to know where the golden quartz had come from, but no one could make reply; no one even knew which party of prospectors had dumped down the stone as useless lumber in the Commercial's back-yard, much less the spot whence it had come, so that possibly another Great Boulder may for ever conceal its treasure. The specimens were taken to the bank by the escort during the week, and doubtless long ere this the trove of the prosaic cobble-stones is passing from hand to hand in the form of sovereigns, with nothing to distinguish them from any other samples of Her Majesty's coinage of less historic interest. It is not to be wondered at that the merits of cleaning up on Sunday morning impressed itself upon most of the other hotel-

A HISTORY OF THE FIELDS. BY AN OLD CHUM.

DRY BLOWING AT WHITE FEATHER

A NUGGET IN THE PAN.

keepers of the town, and a general search was made for prospectors' leavings, but up to the time of our departure from the town, a great deal of stone-cracking had been done without any more golden veins coming into view.

We made another discovery at Hannan's during our visit—a treasure that our artist must have the full credit of finding. Our artist, who has a natural aptitude for lighting upon curiosities that are overlooked by the casual observer, was usually out of his blanket an hour or more before the rest of us had stirred, and when he once got loose on his rambling

AN ABORIGINAL ARTIST.

ABORIGINAL SKETCHES.

excursions it required considerable ingenuity to find him again. Whenever a halt was called on our journeys he would tuck his sketch book under his arm and leave us, and I am prepared to state on oath that he was lost at least a dozen times during our trip, and had the whole party out scouring the surrounding country for him. One morning, while seated on a kerosene can sketching a camel, a young woman in a gigantic hood, told him that there was a native "at the back" who could use the pencil. She indicated "the back" with her thumb, and

following the direction indicated, he found a conglomeration of corrugated iron and wood shanties, and squatting on the ground with a baby in her lap, was the female native delineator.

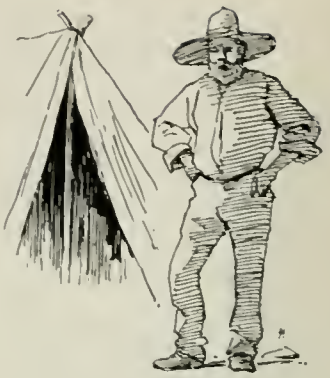
Our artist immediately proceeded to interview her.

"Would she draw something for him?" he asked. She readily consented, and in a short time made the two attempts here printed in *fac simile*. She was extremely modest about her productions, saying apologetically, "Me try-um better nudder time." For this laudable intention he presented her with a stock of paper and pencils.

If you go to Hannan's, you might call at "the back"—they will introduce you to it at the front—and see what progress she is making. One thing you may be sure of, she will not show you her drawings and grandly refer to them as "little things just *dashed* off," as some ladies are given to refer to their puny efforts. O! no; she would say as she said to him, "Me try-um better nudder time."

A camel is not a very pleasant mount for a lady, but the necessities of the fields sometimes require that a woman shall do a journey on a hump-backed palfrey. The wife of the proprietor of the Commercial Hotel is equal to such an emergency. The side-seat does not come amiss to camels which have not to be specially broken to accustom them to it, and as they lie or kneel down, to be mounted or dismounted, a rider of the gentle sex does not need any assistance in the operation. There is a cow-camel at Hannan's that goes daily to and from the White Feather, a distance of twenty-four miles, which is very light work for a camel. The animal is always put up at the Commercial, and gets a small ration of chaff in lieu of being allowed to roam in the bush at night. The camel is of a lighter build and finer skin than those which are used for draught. The value of such a hack is from £60 to £75. It travels the twenty-four miles without food or water, and makes a speed of seven or eight miles an hour. It keeps in better condition than a horse would do upon the same amount of food, and, if necessary, can carry a load in addition to its rider. Some of the hack camels, indeed, are at times mounted by two men, but the foremost rider has only a makeshift seat, as the saddles are only built to carry one man and his tent, blanket and provisions.

The glory of the Civil Service hides its diminished head at Hannan's. Never have Her Majesty's representatives been so shabbily installed in such a sorry suite of offices. A row of tents is all that the Warden's Court, the Lands and Survey Office, the Post Office, and the Registrar's official quarters, can boast of. A burglar with a pen-knife could slit his way into all these repositories of money and records, which are curious evidences of official perplexity to provide for the pressing wants of the hour. That the Registrar has been at his wits' end to comply with the law, and that he is a man of many expedients, is shown by another of his ingenious devices. The law says that applications for leases shall be exhibited. If they are not placed before the public eye for a certain number of days, they are likely to be protested against as irregular, and to be pronounced null and void. But the Registrar had no space, and no place upon which he could set out his notices. He could not affix them to the walls of his office, for tacks cannot be hammered into canvas. If he had turned bill-sticker, and pasted up the piles of applications, the documents would have papered the little tent six deep, and a legal difficulty would have arisen. When a plaguey lawyer in search of a flaw raised the point, could the Warden say that notices stuck on top



"COME AND KEEP HOUSE."

of one another had been "exhibited?" Neither could the Registrar beg or borrow a black-board, for there was not such a thing in the town, and he could not spread the papers on the ground to be sent away by the winds of heaven. In this dilemma a bright idea, which almost amounted to a flash of genius, struck him. The staff was sent into the forest to cut down young trees, the trunks of which were conveyed home. The poles were set upright in the ground to a height of seven or eight feet, and then, to the admiration of the people who are proud of their dauntless and resourceful Registrar, they saw him early and late hanging out his notices on the saplings, like a laundress putting clothes upon a line. The papers tied round the middle soon fluttered in the wind like the mammoth tails of innumerable kites twined upon giant sticks. It was a master stroke of expedient. No man could say that he could not read a notice, no matter how many weather-stained and tattered folios he might have to turn over to get at it. The inspection of the record, too, was much more breezy than making searches in a stuffy office. The law was vindicated, and the Registrar could go on receiving in his tiny tent applications and fat fees for a swelling public treasury, with a light heart. More leases only meant more foolscap for the gales to crackle. The edges might grow ragged with fluttering in the wind, the ink fade, and the paper grow mouldy and yellow, but what of that? The notices were "exhibited" in accordance with the law, and leases had a legal title. The scoffer might smile at the unkempt paper-clothed regiment of posts, flanking the mining offices; but the Government could flatter itself that it had at Kalgoorlie an officer who was able to checkmate the wiles of legal subtlety, to quell discontent, and to walk discreetly amid the pitfalls of a new and embarassing position.

The meat supply of the goldfields is not one of the things that a squeamish man would pry into. It is impossible for the trade to be humanely conducted. What sheep and cattle drafted to Coolgardie and Hannan's suffer before they feel the merciful knife of the butcher, can be conjectured from the appearance of the joints in the retailers' shops. The flesh is of a dark colour, and destitute of fat. The suet is little more than flakes of a sinewy substance covered with parchment. The sheep look like victims of famine; the beef shows far too much bone. The wasting that has taken place since the animals were landed in prime condition by rail or boat at Perth, or Fremantle, is painfully suggestive. A talk with a butcher throws some light upon the trade, which he likes so little that he talks freely of its miseries: "I have been thirty-five years in the business," said he, "but I never saw anything like the cruelty of it here. But what can we do? There is no water or feed in this part of the country, and to pay for bringing fodder and water to the stock from the time they leave the train at Southern Cross, until they find their way into the slaughter-house here, would cost far too much. Until the stock reach Coolgardie, they are driven wide of the waggon road, so that they may get as many bites as possible, and thanks to the Government

CONDENSERS.

WATERING CAMELS.

dams, they so far can get enough water. But after that they have a bad time. Take the Hannan's supply for example. The animals are sent some miles out of the town to try and find them a mouthful, but all the while they are slowly dying of thirst; water is too dear, and is too far away for them to get any. Many a beast is turned into meat after it has dropped from exhaustion. Do you know what kind of meat? Look; here is a piece. It is very dark, you see, and the veins are purple. The beast that this came from did not bleed well. Its blood was thick for want of water. Such food I do not think can be wholesome, but what can be done? The goldfields, especially in the summer time, are no place for stock. What with losses on the road, and while sheep and cattle are waiting to be slaughtered, together with the great shrinkage in weight, butchering in these parts is a poor game, in spite of the high prices of meat. Profits are uncertain, and the trade sickens a man, with the way it has to be carried on." One remedy for the deplorable evils which have been faintly outlined in the foregoing statements, would be to kill stock at Southern Cross, and send the meat on to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, in refrigerating cars at night. The plan will be feasible as soon as the railway is completed, and in the interests of humanity, if not in order to obtain better food, it should be adopted. The present system is a scandal that only needs to be investigated to bring down the weight of an indignant public against it. So far, the wasteful, baneful and brutal practices in vogue, have been tolerated only because of the public necessities. People had to be fed at any cost of suffering to the brute creation, but it will be a disgraceful reflection upon Western Australia if the cruelty continues to be inflicted for a day longer than it can be avoided. Even apart from the question of torture, the gorge rises at the thought of the consumption of meat that would be condemned by the health authorities of any town possessing such guardians. It is difficult to say whether the blood-congested beef, or the emaciated, stringy, tasteless mutton, is the least appetizing dish. Both of them are repugnant to the sight and palate of any diner who cares to inform himself of the conditions under which the surveying of meat is carried on.

"WHERE'S THE NEXT WATER, MATE?"

Chapter 9.

The Bicycle on the Goldfields—The Privations of the Pioneers—Typhoid Fever and its Treatment at Hannan's—The Noble Hospital Nurses—A Coat of Arms for Western Australia—The "Dead Marines" on the Track—Dry Blowing around Hannan's—White Feather—The Future of the Colony's Timber Trade—The Discomfort of Railway Travelling—Tagh Mahomet Murdered—Forced Marches—The Midland Railway.

THE bicycle plays an important part on the goldfields. Myriads of the two-wheelers are met with, mounted by men of all ages and professions. In no part of the world is the machine more popular or valuable, for the roads are flat, and horse feed is at an enormous premium. A bicycle, which needs neither food nor water, and which, even with an indifferent rider in the saddle, is faster than an average hack, is of inestimable value. In its way it is as useful as a camel in the desert. The machines are all of the latest pneumatic tyre patterns, which slide over the soft sandy tracks with comparatively easy pedalling. The climate does not encourage the introduction of the "bone-shaker," or the narrow india-rubber wheel. The goldfields are the market for only the most improved machines, and when an inventor perfects the automatic bicycle, driven by electrical power, he will have a large sale for it in West Australia. On the fields bicycles are used strictly for business purposes. The Saturday afternoon run, the parade in club colours, the ride for recreation, are frivolities that there is no inducement to indulge in under the scorching sun. The commercial traveller, the clerk, the shop-keeper, the professional man who gets about on wheels, is quite satisfied to ride to save time and shoe leather, not on pleasure bent. On the Continent the Romish Church forbids the priesthood to pedal their way through their parishes for fear of lowering the dignity of the spiritual office in the public eye, but the exigencies of the goldfields are superior to such nice scruples. One of the most robust sons of the Church, so muscular a Christian in fact that his machine must have been specially built to sustain his burly form, has made many journeys between Coolgardie and the outlying centres upon his roadster, to minister to the spiritual needs of a very scattered flock. Until the telegraph line was completed the bicycle did the work of the electric wire. Some of the best riders in the Southern Hemisphere—men who had made a name upon the race track—travelled regularly between Coolgardie and Southern Cross. They were equipped with the best machines, and were trained to do the trip in the shortest possible time. These adepts

made a handsome income out of their skill and stamina. The fee was five shillings for each message delivered at either terminus, and the wallets were always well filled. When the telegraph office was opened, some of the athletic corps went further afield with their wheels and their post-bags, but there never has been a bicycle service so well organised and manned as that which was disbanded when the space between Southern Cross and the Golden City was crossed by the puissant wire. The lonely bicyclist takes his life in his hand in crossing the drought-stricken wilderness. Just after we left Coolgardie the corpse of a rider was found on the Menzies' road. He had been overcome by exhaustion and thirst: no help was near in that wide burning waste, and he perished in his arduous calling.

The privations of the prospectors are reflected in their faces when they come into the townships for a brief rest. At Hannan's we had a talk with the leader of one of these parties, who related a thrilling incident in his experience. On one occasion when he had conducted his party through some of the worst of the back country, the water gave out. Two of the horses died. It was too far to go back to the last place where water had been found. Even if that spot could be reached, it was likely that the scanty supply in a small clay-pan would be found to be dried up, or exhausted by other prospectors. The sun was so hot that at the place where it had been expected to find water the "soak" was almost dry. A quart of foul thick liquid, which had to be boiled before the thirstiest man could touch it, was all that could be got. The horses were in the last stage of exhaustion, and there was no relief for them. Their heaving hollow sides and bloodshot eyes, showed their keen distress. If they succumbed, the party were in imminent danger, for they could not travel on foot in search of water encumbered with provisions. In this extremity a council was held. The chance of finding water in various directions was discussed, but the suggestions made were only based on conjecture. None of the party had been so far east before. A death of torture stared them in the face. It was resolved to scour the country all round the camp, and that each man should return to it at nightfall. As twilight was deepening into darkness, all the men except one had reached the rendezvous. None of them had anything hopeful to report as they sat dejectedly on the ground. There seemed now no hope of escape. The want of water was being painfully felt, and the little that was said came thickly from parched tongues. Still the missing man had not arrived. It was growing late. Could he have lost his

"I SAY, YOU'LL CATCH COLD, MY LORD!"

A FAMILY PARTY

GROUP OF MINERS, WHITE FEATHER.

way? A rifle shot was fired to attract his attention if he were within hearing. A faint "coo-e-ee" was heard in response. Presently there was the sound of a horse approaching at a walk. Then the comrade's voice uttering blasphemous exhortations caused all the group at the camp to spring to their feet. In a few moments there emerged from the thick scrub in the starlight the figures of a knocked-up pony, and the rider, dragging something at the end of a rope, which had been used as the ridge-pole of a tent. The prospector had captured a black girl, who wore only a sash of bark fibre. He had, he told his mates, come upon a wild tribe, who bolted as soon as they saw him, and he gave chase. The fugitives were too fleet for his jaded horse, but the girl had stumbled over a boulder, enabling him to overtake her, and he had brought her into camp to make her "show water." But the girl would not give up her precious secret. She was scared and sullen, and while the sufferings of the party were every moment growing greater, she, to all their cries of "babba, babba" (water, water), only shook her head. It was clear that they must wait till the girl, tortured by her own thirst, would reveal the hidden store. When she found that no harm was intended her, she did not refuse food, and a lot of salt was added to the tinned meat before it was given to her. She was hungry and ate freely, while her captors looked on sardonically. In a few hours she became visibly uneasy. Her mouth was dry, and she sought in vain to moisten her lips with saliva. The men feverishly called "babba, babba," and this time there was a welcome response. The girl's eyes shone wistfully, and she pointed in a northerly direction. She was allowed to leave the camp, a lasso round her waist. On she went as straight as an arrow, for about five miles. She needed no compass: her step never faltered. The child of the desert was as familiar with the stars in their courses by night, as with a rock, a bush, or a tree, the landmarks of the wilderness by day. She went directly along the bed of a dry gully, up the side of a rocky scarp. On the summit of the rocks she stopped, and kneeling down, thrust her right arm up to the shoulder in a cleft; she drew out her hand full of water, and drank ravenously. It was a "namma" hole. One of the men eagerly plunged a quart pot through the fissure to try the size of the hole, and pulled it out full to overflowing. Evidently there was a goodly store in this reservoir of nature, and there was a joyous revulsion of feeling from a sense of despair among the parched prospectors. They even had spirits enough to raise a cheer, as the black girl—Mulberry they called her—who had saved their lives, retreated quickly in search of her tribe the moment she was let go. The party had, indeed, very

"ON SHE WENT AS STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW."

narrowly escaped "doing a perish," as the expressive phrase goes out West to describe the fate of a gold seeker, whose skeleton, picked clean by carrion birds, is found by those who chance upon his tracks. The "namma hole" was equal to the emergency. By bailing the water with a quart pot into a bucket, all the horses and camels were watered, and after a two days' camp at the spot, the cistern in the rocks was not dry when my informant and his companion left it, in order to make a successful dash across a long dry stage. The hole widened out from its narrow neck like a demijohn, and it appeared to be replenished from a "soak," or spring. Such reservoirs, more commonly known as "namma holes," occur here and there all over the back country, and explorers are always keenly on the look-out for them; but as in the case under notice, the mouth is sometimes so small as to elude discovery without a guide. Some of the holes are filled by the rainfall, at times from the drainage of a storm channel in the wet season, or from a spring, and the finding of one of them is a red-letter day in the records of an expedition.

A HOOD FOR THE DUST FLIES.

The scourge of the fields, as the bills of mortality show, is typhoid fever. Every year the insidious destroyer claims many victims in the flower of their manhood. The insanitary state of towns which sprang rapidly into existence, is responsible for much of the sickness which has prevailed. While thousands of people were flocking to Coolgardie and Hannan's, they crowded together far more quickly than hygienic laws could be brought into operation for the preservation of the public health. A civic body had to be created in each centre, funds raised, regulations framed, and a cleansing system organised. While this was being done, tens of thousands of people poured in, and the seeds of pestilence were sown. The mining capital threatened to become the breeding ground of a plague. Last summer Coolgardie was the hot-bed of fever, under conditions which were very unfavourable for checking its spread. The heat of the climate, the absence of a well-appointed hospital, the isolated position of the field, limiting the supply of medical comforts, conspired to make the dreaded malady more than usually fatal. The dead were carried daily from the rude infirmary, and as fast as the hearse drove away other sufferers claimed the vacant beds. The Government exerted itself to stay the epidemic, and to do all that was possible for the relief of the afflicted. Medical aid was enlisted, and skilful self-denying and courageous women were found willing to brave all the dangers and discomforts of the lazar-house to minister to the sick, and to soothe the dying. The local Corporation received aid from the Treasury to combat the outbreak by instituting a strict purification within the municipal bounds, and this precaution helped to reduce the death-roll. A great many

invalids were sent to the sea-side sanatoriums in the southern districts, and when cooler weather approached typhoid fever had been mastered, but not eradicated. Nevertheless, the exertions of the authorities to expel the pestilence were not relaxed. A better hospital was erected, all sources of contagion were sought out and purged, the organizations for the better treatment of the sick was improved. Typhoid fever, which medical science has declared to be a preventible disease, was treated as a serious public peril, and to the credit of the municipal bodies, it can be said that this year there has been a great diminution, both in the number of cases treated and in the mortality. Nor was the beneficent work restricted to Coolgardie. The Cabinet showed the same solicitude in giving a strong helping-hand to Hannan's. On the appearance of the fever there, the Council were not, financially speaking, in a position to cope with the outbreak, but the timely Government grant of £2,000 enabled them to put the town in order. During his tour, Sir John Forrest visited the local hospital, and showed his concern for the welfare of the patients, who, it is pleasing to relate, did not nearly fill all the wards. The Premier, in passing the beds, spoke sympathetically to their occupants, and before leaving, intimated to the senior medical officers that nothing should be wanting on the part of the Government to assist him and the managers of the institution in the work of humanity.

120 IN THE SHADE.

The good Samaritans of the hospitals are deserving of a tribute of praise. The unselfish women who have hastened to tend the patients in the fever-wards are as worthy of honour as those noble sisters who cheerfully responded to the call of the wounded and the dying in the Crimea. They—Florence Nightingale and her devoted band—serenely faced the rigours of a Russian winter, the horrors of war, in the performance of their errand of mercy. At the goldfields the nurses—far from home and friends, in a sultry, pestiferous atmosphere—with unwearied care, do all that the gentle offices of women can do for stricken men who are strangers to them. Among these

PRINTERS' CAMP COMPANY.

A SATISFACTORY MEAL.

faithful nurses none stand higher in public esteem than the Sisters of the People, a philanthropic Protestant guild of chivalrous women who, loyal to their lofty ideal of self-abnegation, are to be found side by side with the Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy fulfilling their mission in the slums of the cities, and on the fields labouring assiduously and tenderly in the service of the sick.

At the present time the sanitary condition of the mining towns is as good as can be expected, considering the youth of the Boards of Health and the scarcity of water. The best systems for the removal and disposal of refuse, the inauguration of underground drainage, and the setting up of incinerators, are obviously beyond the reach of immature settlements which are only just beginning to assume something of the shape and character of towns and cities. Where drains have been made, the sewage, owing to the flatness of the

country, mostly soaks into the ground, and engenders the seeds of malaria. But Coolgardie makes an effort to be cleanly. The rubbish of householders' yards is removed and burned by municipal contractors, and the camping of teamsters within certain bounds of the city is prohibited. The impartial critic will admit that, although the Mayor and Councillors cannot point to sanitary reforms of the kind commonly found in older centres of population, they have been zealous, as far as in them lay, to maintain the hygienic credit of the municipality.

It has been cynically said, with quite as much truth as is usually found in a sneer, that the Western Australian coat-of-arms should include the device of a tin-opener and a water-bag. A corkscrew is entitled to quite as prominent a place in the insignia. The whisky bottlers do not need to belaud the quality of their brands in staring letters painted on the trees along the Coolgardie track. A road so thickly strewn with empty bottles is in itself a Leviathan advertisement. "The dead marines" are in every uniform—white, blue-green, yellow, and emblazoned with gilt. Their graves lie thick around the ashes of the camp fires. At stopping-places, where buggy-wheels have diverged from the waggoners' ruts, whisky has evidently been more plentiful than water. On the cleared patches where the teamsters pass the night, we can see that beer is the favourite tipple. A "nobbler" of spirits would not wash down nearly so much of the dust of a twelve hours' march as a "long drink" of Bass or Guinness brew. Nothing is easier, indeed, than for the most owl-eyed tracker to note from the signs of the road, from the dumb records of the festive hours of vanished travellers, the types of those who have gone before. The track itself is an open book writ large, which those who ride may read without the aid of a lively imagination. Here a humble one-horse dray has passed. You can see the dragging pace of the jaded "screw," which has been pulled out of the way time and time again to allow even the creeping waggons to pass. Likely enough the trap carried the wife and children, and the "duds" of the driver, to add another to the canvas homes of Coolgardie. Perhaps the traveller was a "Cheap Jack" with a fresh load of wares, or perchance a travelling blacksmith. Anyway, a bottle of "Colonial" cheered his frugal way. There is the label half buried in the sand, where he turned off and had a "spell." He must have envied that well-appointed drag that, as the wheel-marks show, dashed past him. A four-horse team evidently, with luxuriously-packed hampers. Those gilt-topped Krugs and Epernays must have made going to Coolgardie almost a picnic. See! the sparkling liquor had fit accompaniments: potted ham and tongue and fowl, preserved fruits and plum pudding. The sumptuous lunch has left many relics behind these Sybarites. A broken glass shows that the beaded bubbles winked at the brim of crystal, and, glancing further, the palate was even

SHOOTING WILD TURKEY.

titillated for the generous vintage with an olive. To make a guess, these Epicureans were an opulent Syndicate; or maybe they were lucky prospectors, who for years had known the hardest fare—thirst, poverty, the heart-sickness of hope deferred—till one day a lucky stroke of the hammer or the pick had made them rich. Such men might well drive fast horses and drink champagne, and make jocund the ride to re-visit the scene of their former privations. Or the dainty excursionists are known in the Golden City as fortunate investors, or even wealthy globe-trotters, who esteem Coolgardie as a show place that is worthy of inspection, as it assuredly is. But high or low, rich or poor, it is Lombard Street to a China orange that very few teetotallers move along the great highway to Coolgardie.

All around the city, except on the south side, the scratching of the alluvial miner has thrown up the ground into myriads of molehills. He has worked with the assiduity of the ant, and in countless numbers. The gullies and flats below the low hills have been turned over and put through the "dry-blower." The mounds are in too many cases the monuments of blighted hopes, of loss and unrequited toil. The labour was heavy, the prizes comparatively few. To get here to seize the chance of delving into the gravelly soil, what sacrifices were made, what hardships endured! Far-off hills looked greenest to thousands when the news of the wonderful wealth spread like prairie fire. The tale expanded as it went from mouth to mouth, until it infected all who heard it. The worker's wage seemed paltry as he thought of turning up nuggets at Coolgardie. He built castles in the air, and suffused them with the seductive tints of glowing fancy. The delirium of the gold fever was at work. Employers were quitted; goods were frittered away to raise money for the long, arduous, expensive pilgrimage; wife and children bidden farewell, and home deserted in quest of the shining spoil. The voyage in the steerage of a crowded steamer reeking with the odour of horses and cattle, the long train journey, the much longer exhausting trudge across the wilderness between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, brought the wistful searcher at last to the goal of all his hopes—the goal where for weeks, often as long as he had a shilling in his pocket, he dug, and rocked the dry-blower early and late in the scorching sun, on a ration of tinned meat and damper, all for naught, while the wife at home was counting the hours for the postman to knock with news of his success. Some of the alluvial miners have harrowing tales to tell. I had a talk with one man, who, producing from his purse a tiny piece of gold, said—"That bit cost me £70, the last money I had in the world. I came over with hundreds of others. We thought it would be easy to fill our belts with 'slugs' after all we had heard of Coolgardie; but Coolgardie is like every other diggings—a few are lucky, and the many don't make tucker, especially what tucker used to cost when I came up. Water was 2s. 6d. per gallon: I have paid 2s. for 1lb. of tinned meat,

OVER THE DESERT IN THE MOONLIGHT.

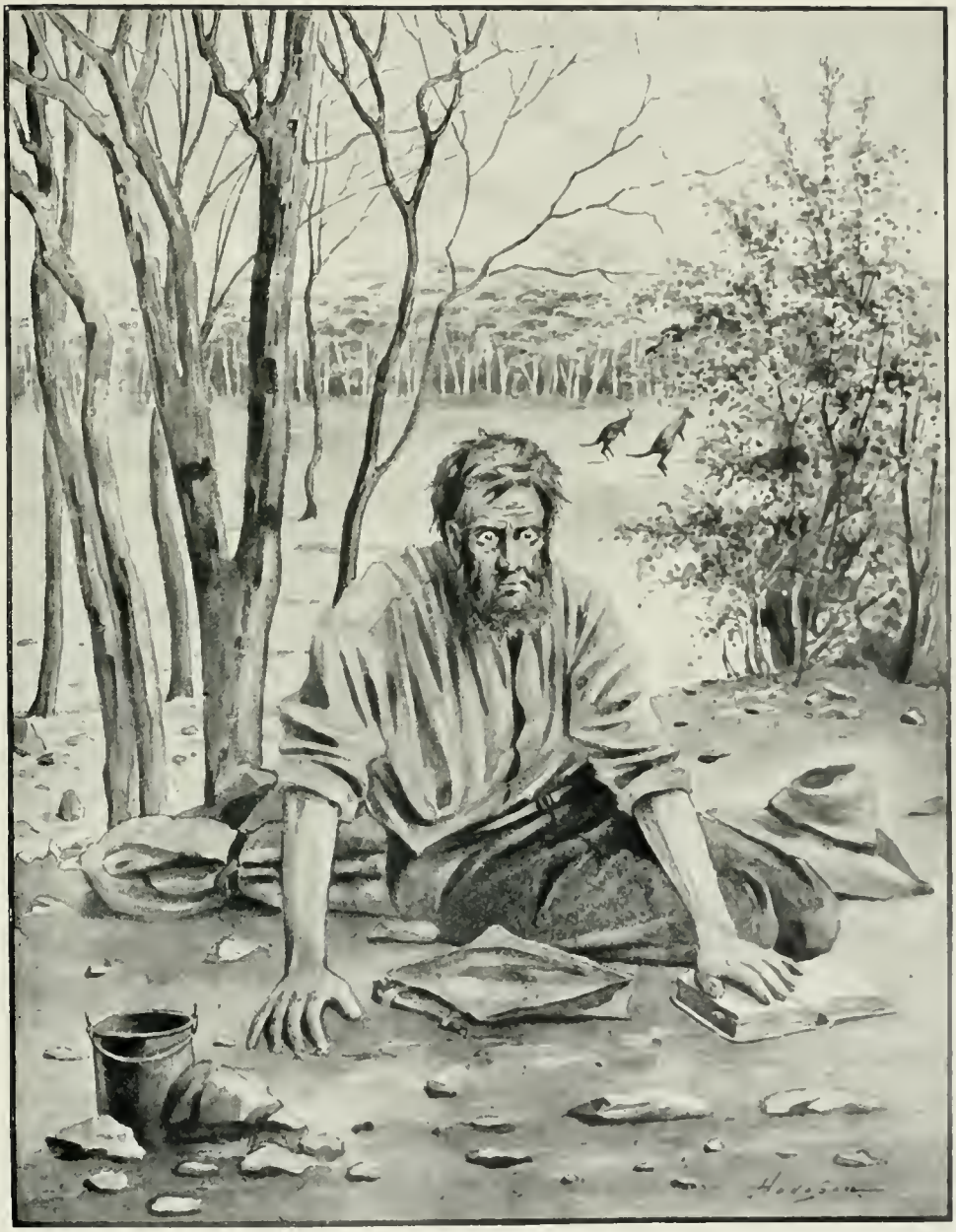
BLACK FLAG. GREAT QUARTZ OUTCROP.

CAMP CONDENSER THE LARGE LAKE, BLACK FLAG.

and 1s. 6d. for a loaf of bread. The few sovereigns I had melted away like fat in a frying-pan. All the time missus, poor woman, thought I was picking up gold, as I had quite persuaded her that my luck could not go wrong. I hadn't the heart to write without sending her something, which she wanted badly enough, God knows, and she took ill with thinking that I had forgotten her. I hadn't the money to go back, but a mate of mine did, and he helped me through. I got work at one of the mines, and since then I've done better, but allowing for the cost of living, the pay is not much better than a man would get in another Colony."

There is no doubt that a great many miners have "gone South" — as leaving the West is called—after giving the Northern and Eastern Goldfields a trial, but the departures are only a percentage of the arrivals. A certain number of men change their plans through irresoluteness, ill-health, or love of change, or through failing to get quickly "into the swim," but these exceptional cases do not condemn Western Australia as a goldfield for sober and capable workers. Besides, a great many of those who appear in the passenger lists of outgoing steamers are merely making a trip to visit their families or their friends, and intend to return. All the while, in spite of the Colony being regarded by many of her immigrants as an uninviting home after the civilised places they have left, they are putting roots down so deeply in the new soil that there is no doubt that the bulk of the incoming population are here to stay. To sail westward is now the aim of tens of thousands of people in South Australia, New South Wales, and particularly in Victoria, while from New Zealand there is also a smaller tide of immigration. The eagerness to reach "the Cinderella of Australia" is sharpened by the good news sent to their friends by a large proportion of those who made the voyage a few years ago, and by the depression in trade and the labour market which prevails in the neighbouring Colonies. No parallel to the wholesale migration of people from one Colony to another that is now taking place from East to West has ever been known in the history of the island Continent. The influx of passengers from the steamers which berth at the Fremantle piers can only be compared to the rush that took place to the goldfields of Victoria in the fifties, but the Victorian statistics were still more phenomenal. Nevertheless, if the local rate of increase should be maintained for a year or two longer, the native-born West Australian will be almost obliterated as a political force. Two of every three men you meet in the metropolis or on the fields are "t'othersiders," in which comprehensive term is included all new arrivals from any part of the world.

The next important centre after leaving Hannan's is White Feather, or Kanowna, to give it its official title. Kanowna is well worth a visit, especially if one goes there as the guest of Captain Bissenberger, who is generally styled, the "King of the Feather." He was among the first to settle in the district, and he is to-day one of the staunchest believers in its mineral riches. There are few parts of the Coolgardie field where Captain Bissenberger is not popular, and the mention of his name ensures a welcome to the best that any camp has to offer. From such a host one hears many curious tales of early days on the fields, and realizes something of the privations and dangers that the early pioneers were called upon to undergo. As one sits beneath the shade of a comparatively cool tent, with a pipe and a white man's peg of good whisky, it is difficult to realise the hardships



"Another victim added to the long list of those who have perished in the dreary bush. A man has been found lying dead near Coorow, and beside him were a swag and an open Bible."—*Daily News.*

"BUSHED."
Australia's Horror.

that these men underwent to make the wilderness habitable. The stories, as a rule, run on much the same lines. Directly the prospector gets away from the settled districts, the heat, the drought, and the natives, have each to be reckoned with, and even the benefits derived from the employment of the patient and long-suffering camel, are not unmixed with anxious moments. Many prospectors travel by night, and spend the day resting and praying for moon-rise, while others brave the glare of the sun for the advantage of the additional light. Those who camp at night have often to tramp six or seven miles for their camels before breakfast, for, as Rudyard Kipling writes: "They'll lose themselves for ever, if you let 'em stray a mile." And despite all that one hears to the contrary, camels dislike a "dusty throat" as cordially as any human being. Practice teaches them to exist on very little water, but the practice does not improve their tempers, and after long enforced abstinence, they become savage. Then those who travel by night have to haul them along, while one man is told off to wait behind, and pick up the stragglers. Many of the known water holes are enormous distances apart, and the humour becomes grim, when, after a forty or fifty miles crawl through the scrub, the eager travellers finds that another lot of camels have been there before them, and consumed the supply. This often means that another three days hard tramping will have to be accomplished before the next clay-pan is reached. Then the provisions run short, and the Barcoo rot makes its appearance. Tucker is reduced to tinned fish and plum pudding, and the man who dines daily on this diet, using the wet fish for meat and the dried fish for bread, tightens his belt to reduce the belly pinch of hunger. The fare sickens him; the first bad water he reaches, stretches him out with dysentery, and the quiver of a native spear, as it rips into the sand, throws him into a cold sweat of terror. It is at such times that the salted bushman whistles through his cracked lips, and bustles around with a confident air to put courage into the new chums, and nerve them up for another effort. The man who loses the love of life, dies where he falls, as good men have died before him—the rest push forward to success, or retrace their steps. To the world it matters little which they do, for other men are on the road behind them, and in time the march of civilisation will triumph, and those who have failed in the attempt will be forgotten.

MR. F. BISSENBERGER.

There was a splendid exhibit of the celebrated jarrah timber of Western Australia at the Southern Cross railway station when we passed there. The ground adjoining the extensive sidings was covered with immense stacks of sleepers of the hard red wood. These had been sawn for the Coolgardie line, which is so important a work that while trucks have been wanted in other directions, they have always been freely available for forwarding the material so that the contractor might make the greatest possible progress. The great call for sleepers, building and public works material, has kept the saw-mill working all night. If there had been double the plant it would have been profitably employed. While the sleepers have been in hand, the builders of Perth and Fremantle have not been able to get their orders completed. But West Australia has always been strangely slow to make the best of her splendid timber forests. It is not many years since jarrah was cut only by hand in the Southern district, where this tree principally grew. The sites of the pit-saws of the most primitive kind have hardly had time to become grass-grown since the first steam plant was set up. At last the surpassing merits of the finest hard wood in the world, and which grows thickly over an immense tract of country, began to be recognised. It was found, after a test of many years, that for the piles and stays of piers and bridges, as well as for decking, jarrah was unrivalled. It is impervious alike to the ravages of the sea-worm and to decay in water. Since jarrah was first used in the Colony, no one has lived long enough to know how long it will last. In fact, water seems to have a preservative effect upon it. Some piles taken from the old pier at Fremantle are now as sound as the day they were cut in the forest forty years ago. This discovery suggested that a trial of jarrah should be made in the streets of London, as they are never dry for many months of the year, and some large shipments of the timber have been exported for the work.

"HOME, SWEET HOME," 12,000 MILES AWAY.

It has been estimated that jarrah grows chiefly between Beverley and Albany. On the South-Western line there are a number of saw-mills, but none of them are of a very large size, or equipped with what may be regarded as powerful plant. Some of them, indeed, are little more than portable mills, and from time to time they are removed to new sites to save hauling the logs from a distance. This is one of the first considerations of good management, as jarrah is a very heavy timber, and it grows in hilly country, and has a copious sap. So far little has been done in laying down tram or railway lines into the heart of the forests to bring the trunks to the mills, which is chiefly done in the old-fashioned way on jinkers drawn by horses or bullocks. A strong company with the capital necessary to cheapen and expedite the haulage to a well-equipped central mill would find their work very profitable. The supply of the raw material is practically unlimited; timber rights are granted by the Government on merely nominal terms, and the demand for sawn jarrah is so great that three times within the last twelve months the mill-owners have raised their price-lists without

GOING DOWN WITH FUSE FOR BLASTING.

BUYING WATER.

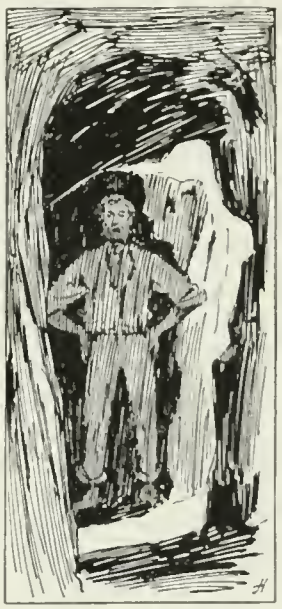
checking the pressure of their orders. While Perth is being practically re-built, and new suburbs are springing up all round the capital, to say nothing of the demands of railway contractors and the growing requirements of the country generally, the mill-owners are masters of the situation. The timber trade, indeed, exhibits the backward condition of Western Australia, which strikes the new-comer so forcibly on every side. The nascent development of the Colony is the opportunity of any new-comer who has not been reared in a village. His business activity and broader views are regarded with a surprise and mistrust, and often with jealousy, by natives who have been brought up in so narrow a sphere. If West Australia is ever to become what the Premier is very fond of describing it—a great country—it will be the new stock that will make it one.

Sir William Robinson, a former Governor of the Colony, is one of its warmest as well as its most influential advocate. On no subject, when speaking of its resources, is he more eloquent than when his theme is jarrah. In his able address to the Colonial Institute on the 12th of June, 1895, he said he regarded this timber, the growth of which extended over 14,000 square miles, as one of the most important national assets of the country. It was one of the toughest and most durable of woods, and he believed that when its good properties became known, the old proverb, "There is nothing like leather," would be given the new rendering of "There is nothing like jarrah." None of the timbers of Western Australia were so valuable for exportation, and it was finding its way into the markets of the world. "The tree," he went on to say, "attains to a very large size, sufficient for all purposes of construction, is of handsome growth, straight and tall, but with the fault so common to the trees of Australia—it is not umbrageous. The white blossoms are, however, very beautiful, and produced in abundance, even when the tree is very young. The jarrah timber has been the subject of exaggerated praise and depreciation, and in either case not without some reason, having been found in some cases to answer fully to the claims made for it of strength and durability, while in others it has failed. The reason for this is not far to seek. Like other timber, it requires to be cut from trees growing on the proper soil—the ironstone gravel of the Darling Range—at the proper season, and the proper age, and, moreover, certain parts of it are of inferior quality; it is also difficult to season, being liable to split in the process if care is not taken. The great and sudden demand which at one time was made for this timber induced, as I

A HAT, AND A RISE IN THE WORLD.

fear, its exportation to fulfil contracts as to quantity without sufficient regard to quality; but when the necessary care is taken it will be found to justify the encomium of Baron von Muller, whom we all know as a competent authority, 'that for the durability of this timber it is unsurpassed by any kind of tree in any portion of the globe;' and under such circumstances it has three properties of great utility—it resists the marine teredo and the white ant, and is not affected by the oxidation of iron bolts or nails."

The mills being over-tasked, a great deal of employment is being given to men who are skilful with the broad axe. A railway contractor who wanted sleepers, advertised, about the time these lines were written, for a hundred hewers, and he had to offer good wages more than once before he got his complement. Some engineers prefer hewn to sawn sleepers, but one would think that the world was old enough to place the broad axe, except for occasional trimming, in the lumber-room along with the sickle. In Western Australia, at any rate, there is enough for every handy craftsman to do without wasting his time and muscle in doing by hand what everywhere else is done by machinery. And when one hundred hewers are advertised for in the Golden West, the saw-miller of other lands, who finds competition keen and markets dull, may make a note of the fact that Western Australia will be glad to see him if he will come along with his plant.



AT THE BOTTOM OF A SHAFT.

There is also more than one opening for builders of railway rolling-stock, particularly trucks and vans. The passengers, heaven knows, are badly enough off without sleeping cars, refreshment rooms, or civilised caterers. Still, they get to their journey's end all the same, morose and dyspeptic though they may be after passing through the ordeal. It would be a greater trouble to be left behind like the loading of consignors. The business man is driven to despair by the inaptitude of the Department. His plans are foiled, his business is checked, his customers are full of reproaches, the newspapers and the mail-bags are bulging with indignant protests. The traffic-manager and the engineer-in-chief blandly inform the public that "the block" is not their fault. They requisitioned for sufficient rolling-stock when the avalanche of business was approaching, and they could not get what they wanted. The Government cut the estimates down, and curtailed the orders. When this came to light the people fell to blaming the Minister for Railways, the Hon. H. W. Venn. A great public meeting was held in Perth to denounce him. Then a serious rupture occurred. Mr. Venn said that the saddle must be put upon the right horse. He wrote a letter to the Press explaining that Sir John Forrest, the Premier, was really the Lord of Misrule. It was the Premier, the Minister of Railways alleged, who vetoed the rolling-stock indents. Here was a startling denouement! It is not every day that the public can see Cabinet colleagues recriminating each other in print. The plot soon thickened. The amazed Premier wanted retraction, contrition, submission. He sent to his audacious colleague severe homilies upon the loyalty due by one Minister to another, but Mr. Venn turned the rebuke upon his chief.

Sir John Forrest, he averred, had set the example of disloyalty. The Premier, according to Mr. Venn, had played a most ignoble part. He had refused to allow enough rolling-stock to be obtained; then he had traitorously thrown reflections upon the Railway Department for the shortcomings for which he (Sir John Forrest) was to blame. Mr. Venn emphatically declined to be made a scapegoat of by such a chief. The truth must prevail, he said in effect, even though the reputation of Sir John Forrest should suffer. If Mr. Venn had forwarded his resignation with this reply, he would, by general consent, have retired with honour, but he made the strange mistake of supposing that he could be in serious conflict with the head of the Government and yet continue to be a member of the Ministry. Sir John was not slow to take advantage of his opportunity. He naturally called upon the Minister of Railways to resign, and Mr. Venn, with a blind infatuation that most of his best friends find inexplicable, obstinately refused to give up his office, with the result that on the recommendation of the Premier, he was dismissed by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gerard Smith. Mr. F. H. Piesse, who represents the Williams district, and who is a successful business man, accepted the vacant portfolio.

It is recorded in Scripture that a certain king waxed fat and kicked. Bumble, the parish beadle, gravely decried meat as being too stimulating a diet for the pauper Oliver Twist. The meat of prosperity has made the Railway Department imperious. When such primitive lines—only one remove from tramways—can earn a profit clear above working expenses of £100,000, as they did last year, it is, perhaps, not surprising that the Department should not be very subservient to the needs of the public. It is the author of some curious mandates to a community that is beseeching it to earn a larger income. "No goods received for transmission over the Southern Cross Line until further notice," has been a common advertisement in the newspapers. The private trader who should treat his customers like this would soon be ruined, but the Government has no competitor as a carrier. They flatly refuse to give Coolgardie the benefit of a short and cheap railway to Esperance out of regard for the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle. Hence it is no wonder that a feeling is growing up that the goldfields have no affinity of interests with the other parts of the Colony, which, while greatly profiting from the mines, do their best to bleed the mining population. At a public meeting at York the other day a speaker declared that there must be a distinct cleavage of political parties. The towns and the rural districts must strongly combine against the goldfields in order to prevent the introduction of Free Trade, which would make the miners' cost of living cheaper. Sir John Forrest, too, in a more guarded way, leans to a similar conviction. He has lost no opportunity of advocating the organisation of "a country party," perceiving that when the day of reckoning at the polls arrives there will probably be a disagreeable re-distribution of political power.

Coolgardie passengers have a very comfortless railway ride to and from Perth—a ride that stirs up all that is unlovely in human nature. It makes men deceitful, if not bare-faced liars. The golden rule of doing unto others as you would be done by is translated into "Look strenuously after Number One." Every man manœuvres pitifully to keep more than two others out of his carriage. He dummies the seats with his wraps, rug and bag. "We're full here," shouts many a passenger who would willingly pay twice the fare of a sleeping berth, if such a thing were to be had, to spare himself the sin of Ananias. Often a porter is

BUYING CAMELS

DANDIES.

bribed to turn down or mask a light, lock a door, or to connive at the exhibition on the window of a piece of paper, that in the semi-darkness may be mistaken for the potent official legend "Engaged." Meanwhile the station-master is hunted like a badger by passengers who have paid for seats and cannot get them. They brandish their tickets, and threaten suits for indemnification if they are not taken on. The unhappy station-master reluctantly declares that he must find seats somewhere. With a bull's-eye lantern he pries out the dummies. The sleep of subterfuge flees appalled at his approach. When he has finished his inspection the train is really full. The travellers scowlingly sit stiffly in their seats, where they will have to sit all night, with hatred in their hearts. The interloper who got his seat at the last moment, and his neighbour who has marked it for his couch, are mutually disgusted with each other. The one is inwardly growling at the brutal selfishness and mendacity of people who want luxuries on a West Australian railway; the other is full of uncharitable thoughts of the boor who has spoiled his night's rest. The Railway Department will have a great deal to answer for when the books of the Recording Angel are opened.

While we were in Perth, after visiting Coolgardie, and were preparing to go to the Murchison, Tagh Mahomet, one of the Afghan brothers who have been prominently mentioned in these pages, was murdered by a countryman named Goulam Mahomet, under circumstances so remarkable that a brief narrative of the tragic occurrence will not be out of place. The assassin and his victim had quarrelled. Goulam Mahomet, who used to accompany prospecting parties, sought a reconciliation, and was repelled with contumely. So bitter was Tagh Mahomet's resentment that Goulam professed to be in fear of his life, and, to use the words of one of his intercessors, he resolved "to get his blow in first." He made sure that the blow should be swift, and that it should be a deadly one. Tagh Mahomet was on his knees praying in the Mosque at Coolgardie, when his enemy crept behind him armed with a loaded revolver, hissed a curse in his ear, and shot him through the back. Then, with the stoicism of his race, he drew the remaining cartridges out of the weapon, in order that no one else might risk injury in capturing him, walked to the police-station and gave himself up. At his trial there was a slight attempt made to show that he had unhinged his mind by smoking "herss," but the defence of his counsel, Mr. George Leake, laid more stress upon the theory that the deceased had attempted to bribe Afghans to kill Goulam. Counsel appeared to aim at inducing the jury to recommend the prisoner to mercy, so that he should escape the gallows, but in this he was unsuccessful. On the morning of his execution Goulam, who was a young and handsome man, behaved with the fortitude of his race, which, as Macaulay tells us, enables them to bear inevitable evils with the serene composure of a fatalist. He came on the scaffold attired, as also was the attendant priest, in spotless white vestments, barefooted, and wearing a red fez; and, after praying, made a speech for several minutes without a tremor in his voice. With his dying breath he declared that he was innocent of the crime of murder. He was a Mussulman, and being in

"THANKS AWFULLY, DON'TCHER-KNOW!"
(A SNAKE IN POSSESSION).

the last moments of his life he would tell the truth. Tagh Mahomet was rich, but he did not kill him to rob him. He killed him because he (Goulam) feared that his own life would be taken. Tagh had offered bribes for his death, and three times the doomed man said he had narrowly escaped. His head got so bad at last that he fired the shot. He brought his life to the hands of the English, as he thought he would get justice; but it appeared to him that Englishmen never forgave, for since the Afghan War, and the massacre of the English at Kyber Pass, they had borne no good feeling towards his countrymen. "Had I been a white man," he exclaimed, "I should not have been here; but I am happy to-day, for I know in my heart that although I killed Tagh Mahomet, I did not murder him." The priest passed the Koran across the bosom of the culprit, and traced the words *La ilaha ilullah* with his finger on his forehead. Goulam then took leave of his friends, invoked their prayers, and begged them to send his love to his three brothers in Afghanistan. As the white cap was being drawn over his face, he fervently ejaculated the Mahommedan prayer, *La ilaha ilullah Mahammadur Rasullullah* ("There is no God but the one God, and Mahomet is His Prophet"), and died with these words upon his lips. Goulam's friends were permitted to inter his body with Mahommedan rites outside the gaol walls, and about twenty of his countrymen took part in the ceremonies, which included the distribution of fruit, dates and nuts among the mourners and onlookers. The coffin was covered with flowers, and it was borne to the grave on the shoulders of Afghans.

MIRAGE—OR—WATER.

To get through the tour to the other goldfields in the short time at our disposal, it was necessary to make special preparations to ensure speed. There is a well-appointed coach service between Mullewa and Cue, the capital of the Murchison mining district, nearly three hundred miles from Geraldton, the port of this division of the Colony, but the coach would have been too slow for us. We had booked our berths by the P. & O. Company's R.M.S.S. *Australia*, which would leave Albany for London on February 2nd, it being imperative that we should be in London on the 5th of March. Nothing but forced travelling and our own organisation would compass the extensive journeys arranged upon our ample programme.

There was not an hour to be lost if due time was to be devoted to a full inspection of the principal mines around Cue and Day Dawn. It was just possible to cover the ground if we drove our own drag with a picked team of horses, and speedy relays at convenient changing stations. But we could not leave Perth before Saturday, and there was no train between Geraldton and Mullewa on Sunday. To lose a start from Mullewa on Sunday afternoon, at the latest, would be to hopelessly throw our clock back. Could a special train be engaged to take us to Mullewa? If it could the rest might be left to the fresh, upstanding teams of Mr. Gascard, the coach proprietor, to whom we had weeks previously sent our order to equip us for the road. The answer to a telegraphed enquiry soon told us that the train would be ready, and we felt sure that Cue and Day Dawn would see us "up to time."

We left Perth by the 9 a.m. train, and reached it in the small hours next morning, after a pleasant acquaintance with the railway of the Midland Company, which starts from the junction of the Eastern Line near Guildford. Thence the route runs northward, *via* Gin Gin, to Walkaway, a distance of 276 miles 56 chains, where it joins the Government Line running to Geraldton. The Midland Railway was laid before prosperity dawned upon Western Australia, and when the making of long lines was beyond her slender resources. An English Company wanted land, and of land, the poorest to be found in any of the Australian group, the Colony had plenty to satisfy the earth hunger of the most capacious appetite. So a bargain was struck between the impecunious Government and the capitalists. Parliament agreed to give the Syndicate 12,000 acres for every mile of railway which they constructed, and the work of construction was commenced. The Company had, however, misjudged its resources, or the value of the territory it was ceded. They had to ask for the assistance of the Government to enable them to complete the line. The Treasury advanced £500,000 upon the security of the property and rights of the Company, and in his Budget Speech last August the Premier made a complacent allusion to the fact that the interest then due had been paid by the Company without further aid being applied for. The error which both the Midland and the Southern Railway Companies have made was to assume that settlement would follow as thickly upon the track of a steam-engine in West Australia as in other parts of the world, and that they would readily sell their land grants at a payable price. But the yeoman is too good a judge of the quality of a soil to be eager to acquire a holding in this Colony. While the Government finds some difficulty in giving away free farms of 160 acres, which any man can have for the asking, it is not surprising that the land grants of the Railway Companies are dull of sale at from 10/- to 30/- per acre. Nearly all the territory of the Midland Company remains in a state of nature, and unoccupied, except by a few cattle and sheep. A better prospect is, however, opening up in the general and rapid progress the Colony is making. Every year the area of land belonging to the Crown, that is at all worth selecting, is growing smaller, and, if the good prices which are now obtainable for produce

BILLY. A CAMP FAVOURITE.

CUE, 1893

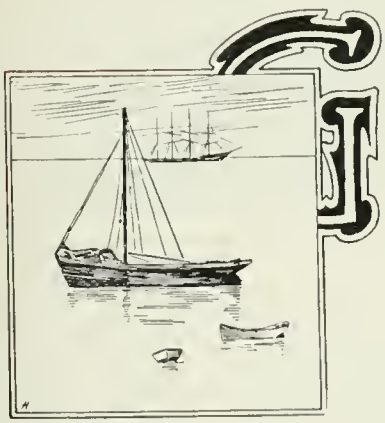
CUE, 1894.

should be maintained, farmers must buy blocks from the Land Grant Companies if they are to cultivate any new areas. But the grower can see a cloud appearing—a cloud at present no bigger than a man's hand. The shadow has been cast by Sir John Forrest, who has hitherto posed as the staunch friend of the farmer, who, in voting power, will be thrown into the background as soon as the miner gets the franchise. Sir John is quick to see the trend of events, and he likes to be on the side of the biggest battalions. A great change of front was observable in the speech which he delivered at York, in June of this year, shortly before the opening of Parliament. In diplomatic language he broke the force of the blow that the farmers were shortly to be left in the fiscal lurch, by Western Australia being made a Free Trade port. The mining interests asked that the duties on produce should be swept away, because the Colony could not grow enough to supply her own requirements, and that would soon be done. He also hinted that the constituencies would probably be appealed to on the question, and that he fully expected to win on an issue in which all the townspeople would unite against the yeoman, in order to reduce the cost of living. This no doubt is a clever move in the game of politics, and in the interests of all who are not producers, but it will crush the Western Australian farmer with sledge hammer force. With the aid of the duties, he is as a rule hardly able to live. His land is very costly to clear, and he must spend more money to fertilise it; he is often remote from a railway, and rarely has more than the most primitive appliances: the crops are scanty as compared with outside yields, and labour is inferior and dear. The protective duties have been his salvation; take them away, and he must go to the wall. To prove that farming is not a "good thing" in this Colony, it is only necessary to point to the backward condition of the industry. When "there's money in it," plenty of suppliers go into a business, but very few people "go on the land" in Western Australia, with all the attractions of the present market before them. Throw open the ports to the unrestricted competition of the neighbouring fertile Colonies, where the plough can be put into tens of thousands of acres without the expenditure of a shilling upon clearing, and local producers will be prone to resign in despair the struggle to live by the plough. Last year the Colony paid nearly £500,000 for imported food, which ought to have been grown at home, and Sir John Forrest affected to bemoan the fact, and to promise further encouragement to the country people. After watching the signs of the times astutely for some time longer, the Premier's promised aid takes the form of removing from the struggling industry its mainstay by abolishing the protective duties. It will for once be instructive and entertaining to note the political developments of Western Australia, to see what will be the outcome of the betrayal of the country party by the Government.

BACK FROM COOLGARDIE. A PEEP AT THE SEA AGAIN.

Chapter 10.

Geraldton—The Fate of the "West Riding"—The Superiority of the Midland Railway Company's Line—In Praise of Mr. Gascard—Melancholy Mullewa—A Night at the Traveller's Rest—An Experience of Chinese Cheap Labour—Surveying the Railway Route to Cue.

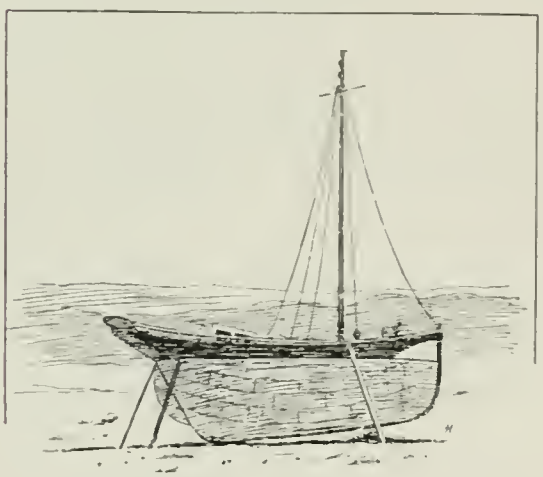


GERALDTON is one of the chief coastal towns of Western Australia. As the port of the Eastern Goldfields, and of an extensive pastoral territory, it is a place of some importance. The main streets are lined with large and substantial buildings. A palatial hotel, much superior to any to be found in Perth, has just been erected close to the shipping pier. The railway buildings are neat and spacious, while the churches of the leading denominations are striking evidences of the liberality of their adherents. But the streets of Geraldton, which were laid out in the old days when the Colony was a convict settlement, look narrow and insignificant in comparison with those of the capitals of the goldfields. The shipping trade would be greater than it is, if the harbour afforded better protection to the mercantile marine. The port is, indeed, little better than an open roadstead exposed to the gales of the Indian Ocean, and the sunken rocks which lie near the approaches to the wharf are an additional cause of anxiety to the mariner. The fate of the *Mayhill*, a fine new ship laden with railway rails for the Coolgardie line, shows the perils of the haven. While endeavouring to make her anchorage, the vessel got aground on a reef, and in spite of every effort to get her off, her hull, still hard and fast, stands on an even keel in sight of the pier. A great deal of her cargo was recovered.

A strange fatality has appeared to attach itself to vessels chartered by the Government to bring railway iron from England. A barque, named the *West Riding*, with one of these cargoes, has never been

Wreck of The Mayhill

heard of, and her disappearance delayed the progress of the Coolgardie contract. As long as it was thought that she was merely overdue through stress of weather, nothing was done to replace the rails which were essential to the completion of the line at the stipulated date. The public grew keenly interested in her fate as week after week went by, and an incident that occurred at Fremantle brought it still more mournfully home to the minds of all. While the general feeling of suspense was at its height, a "second sight" medium arrived to exhibit her powers at the Town Hall. Some of the examples she gave of her gifts of divination gained her many disciples, who were sure that such singular disclosures could not be ascribed to charlatanism. They were mystic revelations which must confound all doubters of supernatural vision. The séances daily grew in fame, and Madame —— became the much-talked-of marvel of the hour. Even the sceptics began to be shaken in their unbelief, and to ponder that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. The Town Hall nightly was full to the doors. In the midst of the excitement an anxious inquirer bethought himself to learn from the seer whether the *West Riding* was still afloat. The medium was nothing loth to set the public mind at ease. She fell into a trance, and beheld a vision which was described to a delighted house, and rapturously applauded. The narrative was a graphic and impressive one. It depicted the barque in a fearful tempest; the sea ran mountains high; the vessel was labouring heavily; the crew were at the pumps; the captain, a brave and skilful seaman, stood by the side of the man at the wheel, giving orders to ease the ship when a great sea threatened to engulf her. Now, by a dexterous movement she was clear of it. She rose out of the trough of the billows fighting her way onward, triumphantly battling the wrath of the elements. The *West Riding*, the medium declared, amid a shout of joy that shook the roof of the Town Hall, was safe. She would make port, but in a battered condition, and after many days. She would be signalled off Rottnest Island—the site of the Fremantle lighthouse—on a certain date. The date was taken down. It was published in the newspapers, and long before the truthfulness of the seer's vision could be tested by the look-out man at the lighthouse, the professor of "second sight" had departed. The fateful day came and went; the lighthouse look-out strained his eyes scanning the sea in vain; the people of Fremantle anxiously watched the flagstaff for the signal that was to announce the incoming of the *West Riding*, but it did not appear then or ever after. The sea has not given up its dead, and at last the barque has been added to the list of ships that never returned. When at length the Government became satisfied that there would be no tidings of her, they repeated their order for rails, and extended the contract time for the handing over of the



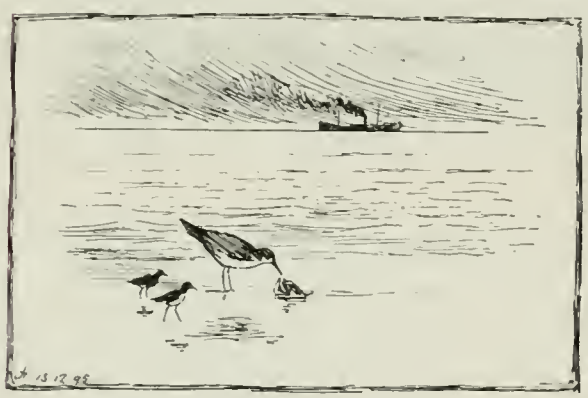
ALONG THE SHORE IN CHAMPION BAY.

CUE, 1895.

CUE, STARTING EASTWARD.

line. The only memento of the *West Riding* that remains in the shipping annals of Fremantle, is the heresy of the townspeople on the subject of the revelations of "second sight."

The excursion to Geraldton was an agreeable contrast to the journeys we had made over the Government railways. The country traversed was a great relief to eyes fatigued by the sight of hundreds of miles of desert; the carriages were not uncomfortably crowded, but above all, the style and appointments are modelled with some regard to the ease of the occupants. It is not creditable to the Government that their travelling arrangements should be very inferior to those of a private Company, but such is the case. The passenger to Geraldton leaves barbarous catering behind him at Spencer's Brook and Hines Hill. The Midland Company's refreshment rooms, in the style of the buildings, the bill of fare, the attendance, and the moderate charges, are apt to make the sojourner forget for the nonce that he is in Western Australia, that is "not hatched out yet." Although there are no sleeping cars, the seats of the carriages, like Oliver Goldsmith's chest, "contrive a double debt to pay." The cunning artificer who turned them out made the cushion frames adjustable, so that five or six passengers may go to bed comfortably on a couch that occupies the whole of the floor space of the compartment. When the last game of cards is over, a spring is pressed here, a flange released there, an easy pull, and hey presto!—there is an inviting expanse of level mattresses joined together unto dimensions that rival the great bed of Ware. The traveller arrives at Geraldton ready for a good breakfast, and guileless of the savage yearnings excited by the night ride to Albany or Southern Cross. After all, it is possible to take one railway route in West Australia, and still be Christianly.

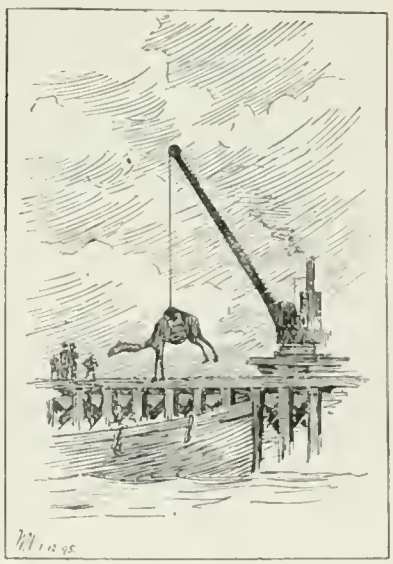


ON THE SHORE, CHAMPION BAY.

The Club Hotel opened its hospitable doors long beyond closing time, and early next morning we went down to the pier to see some camels landed from a steamer, just in from Indian ports. The animals were slung ashore in a broad canvas girth, hoisted by the steam winch. They were very docile, and the aerial voyages went on quietly and rapidly until the disembarkation was complete. The camels were in good condition, but, as might be expected, they were stiff through want of exercise. They were paddocked in some scrub country near the line, for a few days rest before being loaded with packs, and taken to the mines. The enormous demand for camels was shown by the fact that at the date in question there were nearly five hundred of them grazing within a few miles of Geraldton, notwithstanding that large numbers had been daily sold, and sent away for some time previously.

Long before the church bells rang for morning service the alert stationmaster had got our special train ready, and we were soon leaving Geraldton behind at as high a speed as the very "light line" could safely bear, respect for the Lord's Day having suspended all

other traffic. The country between Geraldton and Mullewa, a distance of fifty-six miles, is moderately good grazing land, according to the West Australian definition of the term, that is carrying shrubs in lieu of grass. There are many outcrops of granite and basalt from the reddish soil. The only habitation seen on the way is the cottage of one of the line repairers, where we had some excellent tea and biscuits. A much-scarred warrior, in the shape of a powerful kangaroo dog, benignly wanted to make friends. His crimson stained chaps showed that he had just been on the war-path. The good wife, our hostess, said the hound had been left behind by a travelling party, whereupon he became his own providore among the game of the neighbourhood. We drank our tea to the musical honours of a song of exultation from the fowl-house. A hen that had just laid an egg could not have been prouder of the feat if she had produced the Koh-i-noor diamond. She was a perfect barn-door nightingale. The artist of the mail-boat, who was such a master of mimicry, would have been delighted to add her lofty soprano notes to his repertoire. The full-throated cacophonous solo of this melodious fowl was enough to make all her barren sisters in the yard turn green with envy. It was the first egg of the season, and eggs are eggs at Mullewa.



UNLOADING CAMELS, GERALDTON.

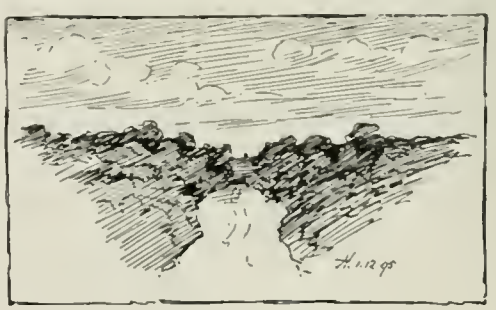
The team which Mr. Gascard had in waiting for us at the Mullewa railway station, did justice to the reputation of his stable. The horses were all imported. Mr. Gascard is, in Western Australia, the king of importers of coaching stock. His operations for a long time ruled the market, and were profitably felt in all the leading horse breeding districts in the other Colonies. The Shipping Companies regulated their stock freights by the terms of his charters. The old fashioned *Nemesis*, sluggish and kindly in her motion, was his favourite boat. She came plugging across the Bight in a leisurely fashion that other captains affected to deride, but she always landed her horses in show condition, and she never left Melbourne without a full consignment. Mr. Gascard had buyers searching all Australia for stock, and to be a buyer for Mr. Gascard is a diploma in horse flesh, but he is the preceptor of them all. For "knowing a horse," indeed Mr. Gascard is almost famous. The critical eye is with him an intuition, quickened and improved by great experience. The glance with which he sums up the points of a horse is as rapid as it is unerring. A large dealer of many years standing, he has had an enormous number of horses pass through his hands. At one time he had the Geraldton market entirely in his control. Just then horses were very cheap "down south," and very dear at Geraldton, owing to the rapid development of the Murchison Goldfields. Another shipper, Mr. John Burns, thought that he would have "a cut in" at Geraldton. He shipped an exceptionally good lot of waggoners' teams to that place, but only to find that Mr. Gascard's business was regarded as so important by the local auctioneers, that they would not sell the horses

NUGGET. NIGGER.
MINER. DIGGER.
A SKETCH ON THE COACH AFTER LEAVING MULLEWA.

of a rival. The result was that in preference to carrying his shipload of stock back to Fremantle, Mr. Burns accepted the price that was offered for it by Mr. Gascard. Of late he has not been importing so largely as he did a few years ago, but as the mail contractor and proprietor of the only coaches running between Mullewa and Cue, he is for his own requirements the purchaser of many superior roadsters. His unvarying rule is to have a good horse, and to feed him well in return for a fair day's work. A bad or an idle horse is his aversion, but in his coach service, of which we shall have something more to say, a willing one has plenty of oats, and not too many stages.

Mullewa, now a village, expects to be a town by the time the line connects it with Cue. So far, the main street has a few stores and houses, with plenty of vacant land between them. By-and-bye, if we are to believe local auguries, these building allotments are to be filled up with something better than the iron and weatherboard architecture of to-day. Mullewa has a wooded landscape, and hills, and valleys, with the tawny glow of a January sun upon it. In the spring time there is a transient gleam of verdure and gurgling brooks, ere the dry season wearily stretches out several months beyond a fair share of summer. The rainfall even in winter is very light, and the scorching sun, with its distressful embrowning glare, soon blurs the hill sides and the vales.

Mullewa is casting an envious eye at Geraldton, the highway to Perth from the Murchison fields. The short road to the metropolis lies between Mullewa and Walkaway —a name which is vividly suggestive of the shouldering of swags, and "footing" it to the realms of Midas. Mullewa says the detour to Geraldton is a public evil, and asks for a direct railway to save freights and fares. This would be very thoughtful and kind of Mullewa, if its main object were not to help itself, and leave Geraldton out in the cold. Geraldton has its back against the wall, fighting hard to defeat the short cut. Her vested interests are furious at the thought of Mullewa becoming the principal starting place of the Murchison line. The eloquent protests of Mr. G. T. Simpson, the member for the district, who is perhaps the most talented speaker in the Legislative Assembly, are loudly echoed in the local Press. The aspirations of Mullewa await the approval of the Government, which is believed to be disinclined to lower the earnings of the Walkaway to Geraldton Railway, and the wealth and importance of the port. The plea of the public is, that



THE TRACK TO CUE. NOTE FROM THE COACH.

THE UNION BANK OF AUSTRALIA, CUE.

THE ROAD FROM CUE.

Murchison passengers and goods ought not to be taxed in freight fares and loss of time, by being taken forty miles out of their way for the behoof of Geraldton, or that of a Government Department, but considerations of this kind are usually a long time in getting a hearing in Western Australia.

The expedition of the Calvert party was a notable feature in Mullewa, partly on account of the celerity with which we were to travel in the height of summer. In five days coaching over a heavy road, almost unprovided with accommodation for travellers, we had to traverse five hundred miles, a journey that had never before been accomplished in the time. The horses were given their heads when we started towards evening on the first stage of thirty-six miles, and they went off with a spirit that promised well for their speed and stamina. We drove past the first line of uplands and down into valleys, and away out on the frontier of the Northern Goldfields, which have only been partly explored. Here and there the road ran by the home of a settler, then over the broad acres of immense sheep stations, and along the course of dry gullies, or touching the fringe of a waterhole. The country was blistered and yellow; nothing but the coarsest herbage had survived the drought, but there was far less dust than on the Coolgardie road.

ABORIGINAL BOY SERVANT, AT THE CLUB HOTEL, GERALDTON

Late at night the driver turned off the telegraph track, and the stars revealed a small tent. "Are you there, Jim?" shouted Charlie from the box-seat. A sleepy voice grunted in response. "The special coach," rejoined our whip: "give us a hand." Curses not loud but deep were muttered by the groom, while he was drawing on his pants. He evidently wished that the coach had been overturned on the road, but his welcome was cordiality itself, compared with our reception at the "Travellers' Rest" hard by. The place was in darkness, the occupants all in bed. The landlord did not get up till the door had been nearly battered down. He looked as angry as a rattlesnake when he came out. A party of brigands would have met with more civility. He had no beds, no supper—nothing. His aspect was a stentorian order to begone. We felt so much in the way that we said we would sleep outside if he would give us a "nightcap." At this call for whisky the ruffian relented a shade. After some parley he said he would find us a blanket on the table, or the floor. On

these rude couches revilings ceased from troubling, and the weary were soon at rest. An early start next morning had been intended, but there was "a lion in the path," in the shape of the Chinese cook. When he was asked to get breakfast in the dawning he contemptuously turned his face to the wall, and affected to go to sleep again. The "missus" and her daughter Maggie carried terms of capitulation to the recalcitrant Mongolian, but he treated them with scorn. He was master of the situation. As a last resource, one of us went to him with gold. He surlily took the bribe, and dished up some greasy half-cooked chops and "post-rail tea," which we partook of with becoming humility. The spurned alien had for once got even with his oppressors, for in Australia the whites aggressively draw the "colour line." The alien must not touch a pick, nor obtain a miner's right. His master, the European, will only tolerate him as a menial servant. The Oriental may cook, wash, or grow vegetables, for on the goldfields the white is loth to do these things for himself, much less for another. The European goes to the mines to make money, not to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; hence the condemned yellow-skin may do this drudgery, and in the opinion of the pale-face who hates him, this is all he is fit for. On the mining roads and at the camps of managers, Chinese or black kitchenmen alone are found, and as they are the only household helps obtainable, it is little short of a domestic calamity, if in a hotel or eating-house John should take offence, roll down his sleeves, and put on his coat, at a moment's notice. "Let them go away without a bite, but don't worry the cook," was in the mind if not in the mouth of the host of the "Traveller's Rest," when we were anxiously bidding for a breakfast with the oleaginous almond-eyed catiff who controlled the commissariat.

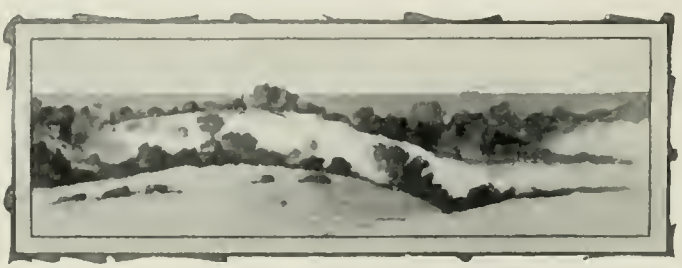
A DESERT GRAVE

On the road we met some well-known railway builders, who were checking their tenders for the making of the line from Mullewa to Cue, a route of about two hundred and forty miles. They had come to see the contour of the country for themselves, and to test the calculations of their staffs. Since the low price of the Coolgardie line had taken the public by surprise, there had been much conjecture as to what the Murchison Railway would cost, and the day was now near when all doubt would be set at rest by the Minister of the Department opening the tenders in Perth. The survey pegs are for many miles within sight

of the main road and the telegraph wire, but on some of the digressions the contractors had a very rough time in getting through, and reached Cue with their vehicles badly damaged. One of them was "stuck-up" half-way by his exhausted horses. Nothing daunted, he got a fresh pair from a neighbouring station, but in his haste to make up for lost time he ran against a stump, and the body of the buggy was thrown clear of the wheels; but he was again equal to the emergency. A few miles away he found a wire fence, which, being sawn through with a knife, supplied lashings for crude repairs. When finally he drove into Cue, he looked as though he had been having a tussle with a torpedo, but he had seen every inch of the survey, and was fully satisfied with his estimates. Ten days later, on the examination of the tenders in the city, there was another agreeable revelation for the people of the Colony, who had been assured that the Coolgardie extension

IN CHAMPION BAY

was the only one that would be constructed at less than cost price for the sake of netting the exceptional traffic premiums before the line was handed over. Yet it now transpired that many firms were competing for the privilege of laying the Murchison line also, for little more than the cost of the sleepers. The lowest tender was at the rate of £433 per mile, exclusive of rails (which are to be supplied by the Government), and the contract is to be completed within two years. The singularity of the tenders was the enormous disparity of the totals, some of them being from 25 to 35 per cent. more than the one accepted. The cheapness of the work is accentuated by the remoteness of the Murchison from Perth, whence all the labour and most of the material has to be drawn, while it can hardly be expected that the contractors' traffic receipts can be nearly so great as those which have been enjoyed by the firm which laid the rails to Coolgardie.



LOOKING FROM GERALDTON.

Chapter II.

The Teams on the Cue Road—Sheep Farming on the Murchison—Aboriginal Shepherds and Trackers—Bullocks and Bullock Drivers—At Chain Pump—"The Brothers"—Gabyion Sheep Station—Yalgoo—Tennis in the Tropics.

THERE is a striking difference between the horses of the Murchison teamsters and those employed on the Eastern Goldfields. They are as much unlike as a heavy dragoon and a light cavalryman, the Coolgardie team being the former. The Murchison driver, like his horses and waggon, is usually a Westerner, just as eastward both men and teams are almost invariably from the "other side," which is another proof of the truth of the homely adage that "birds of a feather flock together." Another peculiarity of the Murchison road is, that freights are very low. It cost as much to carry a ton of goods from Woolgangie to Coolgardie, as from Mullewa to Cue, three times the distance. In other words, the Murchison miner or storekeeper saves the cost of fodder, which the population of the eastern districts have to add to the cost of their goods. The small and hardy native horse, employed between Mullewa and Cue, can be turned loose to find his own living during the night. The big imported Clydesdale must be liberally corn fed in remote places where corn is so valuable that it is sold by the pound weight, instead of per hundred weight or per ton. The native draws a lighter load than his more favoured rival, who would soon shrink to nothing but skin and bone if he had to pull only an empty waggon without finding a well filled nose-bag at night. The explanation is full of pith, but the moral of it appears to be that it is far better for a horse to have been bred in some other Colony than Western Australia.

En route we heard a great deal about the fall in the price of wool, and the injurious effects it had had upon the pastoral interests. The declining profits on the working of stations is felt all the more seriously, inasmuch as Western Australia has never been able to compete with the other Colonies as a wool-producing country. Neither her sheep nor her pastures are equal to those of the Chirnsides, Clarkes, Wilsons, Austins, and many other princely squatters, who, in the early days of the settlement of the several Colonies of Australia, acquired magnificent estates in the most favoured parts of the island Continent. The succulent grasses of leagues of plain, unencumbered with a single tree, such as those of

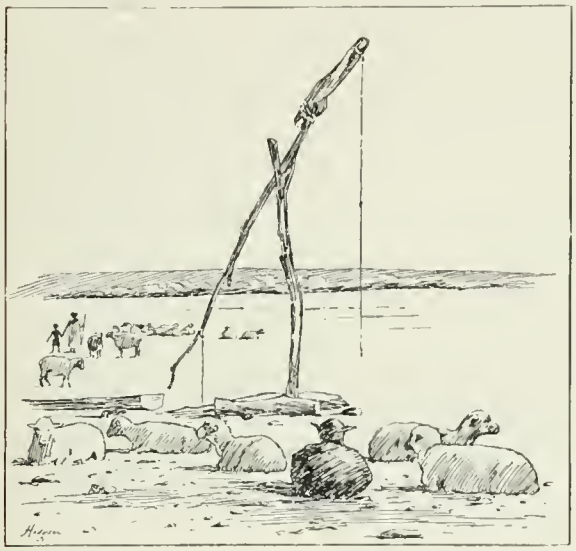
the Western district in Victoria, and of Riverna in New South Wales, assisted by a climate admirably suited to the growth of the sheep in perfection, gave eastern pastoralists a long lead. When they imported the strains of celebrated merino Lincoln, Leicester and South-down blood, they drew for many years immense incomes from their runs. Everything combined to aid their success. The wool grown under such favourable conditions was of the finest and most lustrous quality, and brought fancy prices. It was produced by sheep depastured on rich land, which, even when it was not freehold, was leased from the Crown at a nominal rental. The day came when their prosperity appeared to receive a check. A cry from the people arose: "Unlock the lands," and there was no resisting the demand. The Legislatures passed laws permitting "free selection" upon the squatters' runs; selectors went over them, "picking the eyes out of the country;" but the station owners were in many cases only temporarily deprived of these areas which they purchased from the "cockatoos," out of the enormous profits of their heavy clips of wool. The prosperous seasons lasted so long that, when at last the price of wool fell, the large growers had established such magnificent and highly improved properties, that they were in a strong position to bear the smaller returns. Their flocks, which were nearly all of the best class,

HEADS FROM THE MURCHISON.

had multiplied: English grass and ringbarking had greatly improved the carrying capacity of their paddocks; wild dogs, which had been a scourge among the sheep, were exterminated. On the other hand, the Western grazier was without any of the advantages which his Eastern competitor turned to such good account. His land, his stock, his water supply, were all inferior: the coarseness of the scrub herbage was reflected in the grade of the wool; the bulls drafted for the butcher lost flesh and value, in travelling hundreds of miles to the market. It will be gathered that a sheep station in Western Australia, and a sheep station in any of the other Colonies, are two very different things. Even little Tasmania puts the vast Western Colony to the blush, for Tasmanian stud sheep are highly renowned for their quality.

On the Murchison very little fencing has been done, the chief reliance being placed upon aboriginal shepherds to keep the stock within bounds. The labour of the blacks is cheap enough, as it is to be had for the cost of their rations, but when the natives are left to

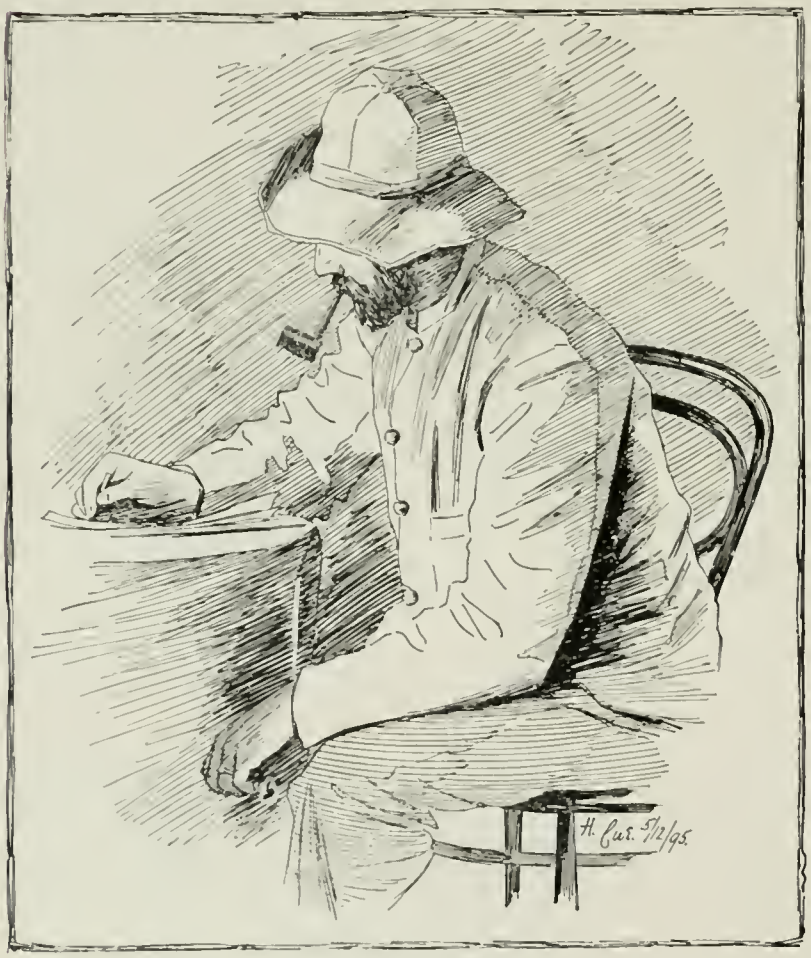
themselves they are not very reliable. It is a common saying that a black has to be kept to watch the sheep, and a white man to watch the black. The most faithful of the dusky serfs are the boys who accompany the European stock-men, and who are virtually the owners of the lads for the time being. Later on I shall deal more fully with interesting and important phases of the native labour question in the "back-blocks," but in passing, it may be said that the aboriginal does not show his best points in the "working" of sheep. He finds his affinity in the horse, especially while he is young. The shepherds are generally middle-aged or old men, or gins (women), who can relieve the tedium of the routine — monotonous work of rounding up and watering a flock of sheep—with a sleep under the shade of a tree, which so long as he has a full stomach, is the black's idea of an Elysium, in his prime or senility. But the eager blood of the stripling seeks a more active life. As the companion—the humble, if not spurned companion it is true—of the travelling inspector, the mail-coach driver, the station manager, when he is on a journey, or the teamster, the "boy nigger" is an invaluable ally. But to get fidelity from a native, he must be caught young and trained like a kestrel to his master's hand; if he is loaned to a stranger he is sullen, slow, and restless to return. In the riding and breaking of horses he excels, doing the work with the skill and ardour of one who loves his task. He can sit a restive colt with the tenacity of gum on a wattle-bark tree, but it is in the finding of strayed stock that the Australian bushman, who is one of the best horsemen in the world, enviously acknowledges the condemned "nigger's" remarkable powers, which, at first an hereditary instinct, have been developed ever since the naked piccaninny of the tribe began to toddle with his mother, when she went out to look for snakes and lizards for her offspring's food. What the spelling-book is to the white child of civilization, the faint trail of the iguana is to the swarthy imp—nay, much more—for the study of the book of Nature is sharpened by the pangs of hunger. No wonder, then, that by the time the lad is ten



AT A "WELL" ON THE MURCHISON.

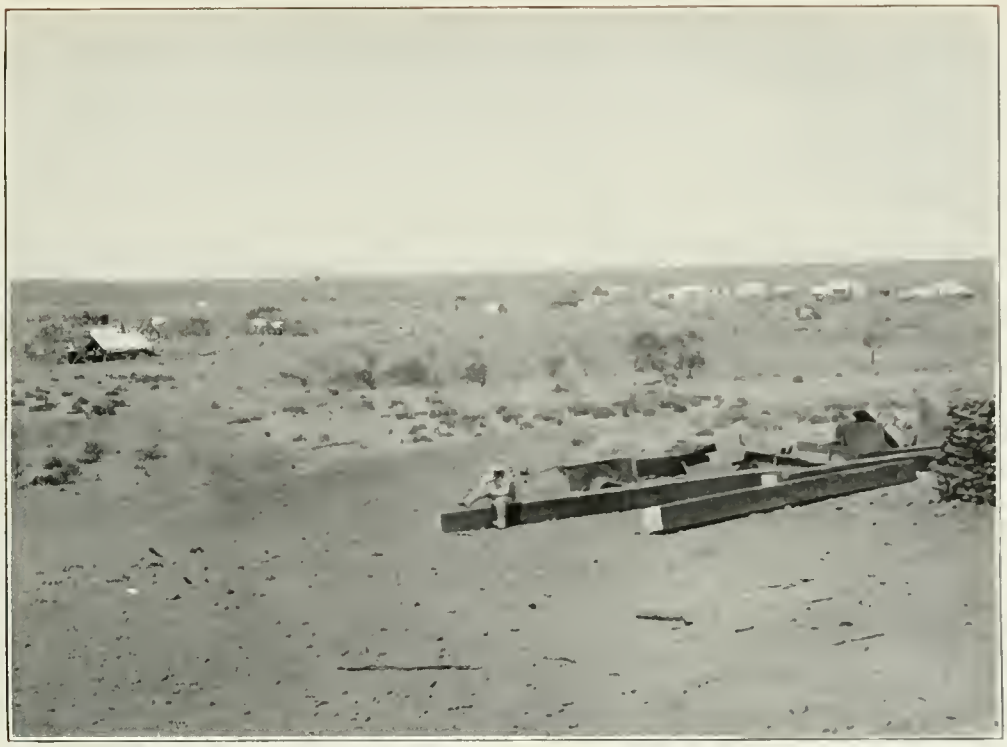
50 MILES FROM THE HOMESTEAD NOR'-WEST.

or twelve years of age, the line missing stock have taken is as plain to him as the finger post at a cross-road. He knows the hoof-mark of every beast he is looking for. A lost nail from a shoe, a pigeon-toe, the slight limp of the old mare, and the springing stride of the Hector colt, are more than enough to keep him following the errant stock as fast as his horse can canter. If for a moment the trail is lost through the truants crossing a granite outcrop, the fault hardly serves to put him on his mettle. He may get off his horse to peer intently with bent head at a speck of stone brushed away or broken, where a hoof has struck the boulder; but rarely, indeed, does he falter for a moment, and the rich blood would mantle his dark cheek with shame, if he had to confess that he was so far foiled that he must ride round the outcrop to pick up the track on the far side of it. Such is the work that enables the black boy to earn a place in the estimation of his keeper, that is akin to the feeling of a shepherd who thinks that his well broken collies, Dan or Sandie, saves him a lot of trouble. The "nigger," like the dog, gets his bit of broken victuals, and is thought to be well paid at that. The native is never in the remotest degree looked upon as "a man and a brother," much less as "God's image cut in ebony."



REPORTING THE TOUR.

Oxen are used by some waggoners on the Murchison. To a stranger the long processions of bullock teams, which are common enough in the remote parts of Australia, are of some interest. The huge wide-spreading horns would make him shun yoking up the beasts, but they are not nearly so fierce as they look. The terror of the immense whip of the driver ensures their docility. A very boa-constrictor of green hide, it can, in the hands



DAY DAWN, 1893.

DAY DAWN MINE.

of a skilful practitioner, make hair and blood fly at every stroke, and the bullocks cower as it whistles and cracks over their heads. This terrible weapon must not be confused with the stock-whip of the mounted drover, which is longer, thinner, and has a short handle. The stock-whip, thin where it joins the stock, thickens like a carrot a little way down, to give it balance or striking power, and then tapers off for twenty feet to a rat's-tail, terminating in a lash of cord. The whip is wielded with the right hand of the rider, as, in the "cutting out" or "running in" of stock, he gallops recklessly down the mountain sides, or through the thickest scrub or timber, with the intrepedity and the consummate horsemanship of the Australian mounted bushman, who may be fairly said to have grown up in the saddle. The great length of his whip, dexterously whirled by the stockman while his horse is spurred to its topmost speed, and brought down with a cruel cut across the eyes of an obstinate brute that is trying to escape, rarely fails "to turn" him back into "the mob."

The bullock driver's thong, on the other hand, has a sapling for its handle. The teamster who walks beside his cattle, holding his long, green, willowy staff with both hands, swings it till the long lash, flying in a circle, gains momentum, and then, if he means to administer punishment, brings it down with terrific force upon the flank or back of one of the tugging oxen. The beast, fast in the bonds of a heavy neck-yoke of wood and iron, and the hauling chain, is quite helpless, no matter how severely it may be flayed, and the fear of punishment is seen in the shrinking eye and the spasmodic rush, as the green-hide is lifted. The whip is a bunch of reins, breeching straps, and a castigator all in one. The oxen, flecked on the near or the off-side, swerve in to the right or the left in obedience to the touch, and they stop abruptly when the stock is brandished upright in their faces, something after the motion made by a drum major with his baton when the word to halt is given to a regimental band. The bullocks are broken to their work when they are about three years old. An "old stager" is used as a tutor, just as a tame elephant is employed in India to bring his younger brethren into subjection, or a steady old break-horse is put alongside a colt to check the youngster's impetuosity in double harness. The teamster's recruit, who has been running all his life in the bush as free as the wind, and who, since branding time has rarely seen a human being, finds his servitude very galling. His neck muscles, upon which he has to strain, are soft and undeveloped; the massive yoke, with its bands of wrought iron, is hard to bear. He is scared and angry, and the cracking, if not the cutting of the whip, does not soothe him. The tyro is for a time abject, sullenly savage. He sulks, refuses food, loses flesh, even though he does not pull an ounce. He is hardly expected to do much work while he is in his noviciate, but the whip is brought smartly into play if he shows any disposition to hang back. There is no mistaking the bovine pupil. We passed one a few miles from the "Traveller's Rest," just after he had started on his first day's servitude. With head

THE SIGN FOR A NIGHT'S TRAVELLING.

lowered and blood-shot eye, his unsteady gait, now a plunge forward, and then a rearward lunge, a new chum would have known that he was "new to the game." The well-seasoned veterans who shared his fate plodded along with the slow dogged staunchness that performs so much on rough or boggy roads. A horse, when his waggon sinks to the axle or gets stuck against a boulder, will often go on his knees in a high-couraged wrench to "shift the load," and then, failing to do so, will refuse to try again. But a string of bullocks in a tight place have the tenacity of Cornish miners in a tug-of-war. They bend slowly and resolutely to the yoke, and "hang on" till the wheels move or the tackling breaks. If they were hitched to a giant oak they would go on tugging with the same sluggish perseverance. Another merit of oxen is, that like the camel and the native Western Australian horse, they depend upon grazing at the camping places for their sustenance, and like the camel, they share the reproach of being "too slow for a funeral." The bullock waggoner has, however, the advantage over the owner of either the camel or the grass-fed horse, inasmuch as he can fatten his worn out animals on good pasture in the spring, and sell them to the butcher. It is well known that "new beef" rapidly put on, makes prime cuts for even a pampered palate, so that a superannuated working bullock often ends his life with gastronomic honour.

ALF., THE DRIVER FROM "CHAIN PUMP" TO CUE.

The Chain Pump Hotel, eighty miles from Mullewa, where we were to get our first change of horses, is a regular stopping place for Mr. Gascard's coaches. He built the hostelry for this purpose, and placed it in charge of a South Australian and his wife, who are well versed in the art of keeping a clean, comfortable inn. The hotel got its rather singular name from a local well, which had a hoisting chain on the bucket instead of the customary length of rope. Beyond the hotel the sandy stretches which had interspersed the chocolate soil disappear, and with four rare steppers fresh from the stable, we were soon well on the way to Yalgoo, a mining town that of late, owing to several rich discoveries in its neighbourhood, has attracted a great deal of notice, causing the coaches to make a detour of forty miles, in order to pass through it. A few miles from the "Chain Pump" Hotel on the Mullewa side, the mulga scrub-covered plains are agreeably relieved by the uprising of the hills called "The Brothers," because they are so much alike, and stand close together. The coach has not much more than room to pass between them. The shape of the hills is very much like that of an inverted cream bowl, their summits defining an almost perfect half circle. Some stunted trees grow on their rocky sides, and the valley at their feet is thickly strewn with smooth round boulders, as large as a hogshead. The best way I can describe the spot is to imagine that in the days of giants it was a favourite diversion of the Titans to play a mammoth game at bowls down the steep slopes of "The Brothers," till they were too fatigued to collect and carry back their playthings. Close by is also seen Gabyion sheep

station, whose fencing round the home paddocks exhibits the dearth of timber in these parts. The straining posts are no thicker than a man's calf—mere faggots compared with what is seen in the jarrah country—and the posts between them, which are eked out with iron standards, are slight and crooked. The flimsy looking fence is not three feet high, but it carries enough wires to make it sheep proof. In a timbered area a substantial cattle fence would not cost so much as a dwarf like this on the Murchison. The posts, such as they are, have had to be carted a long way, and the standards from Geraldton, after having been imported from England or the Continent. To look at the paddocks within the fence, a visitor who did not know the feeding value of Western Australian scrub, would think that the flocks would starve on the Gabyion run, but notwithstanding that there was not a single blade of grass, the sheep looked fairly well. They were not so large in the frame, nor so lustrous even in the wool as might have been wished, but they had evidently adapted themselves to the coarse diet which they must either eat or starve, and as the weather is never very cold, there are not many deaths so long

GABYION HILL. "CHAIN PUMP" (MURCHISON GOLDFIELDS), 78 MILES FROM MULLEWA.

as the stock can get plenty of water. The salt-bush, which in many parts of Australia is one of the most valuable summer feed resources of the sheep breeder, is unfortunately not very common on the Murchison, but there is sufficient of it to help appreciably in tiding over a bad season.

The landscape improves after the "Chain Pump" Hotel is left behind. The chocolate soil now seen is rich enough, if it could be watered, to grow heavy crops of grain and fruit. Such a territory within the rainy latitudes would make it a country to be envied; but Nature played strange freaks when she fashioned Western Australia. She parched the good land with drought, and put the poorest soil where it gets copious showers from heaven; her gifts so strangely assorted, so much disparted from their proper unities, are often useless. In the South-West Division, for example, the bountiful rainfall of from thirty-five to thirty-nine inches, would make it one vast corn-field, were not the land either so sandy, so mountainous, or so heavily timbered that the labour of clearing a few acres fit for the plough is sufficient

to discourage the stoutest heart that is not backed up by a full purse. Here on the Murchison, and between Woolgangie and Coolgardie, where fodder and flour bring a price which must seem to the English, Russian, or American grower, to be almost fabulous, the ground for hundreds of square miles is ready for the plough, yet the plough is useless for want of some of the water that runs to waste into the Murray, the Harvey, and the Blackwood.

The chocolate plains out towards Yalgoo are enclosed in a circle of ranges. The township of Yalgoo is on a small eminence. The town site is flat enough, but the broken country of auriferous areas squeezes the level patch to a small compass. Yalgoo has a ragged look. It was born so recently that it has not had time to shed its ugly caul of hessian, albeit it has begun to get rid of this unsightly appendage of the offspring of all the gold rushes of Western Australia. The hamlet aims at something better than a garb of old corn-sacks hung round poles, and there is at hand plenty of material for a vesture more civilized and less remindful of the waist rag of the blacks. So far, a tent represents the suite of Government buildings, but private enterprise has erected hotels, and a few stores and houses of stone, which is easily hewn from adjacent quarries. The population perspire mining at every pore. To talk of buried treasure is their only recreation. The man who knows nothing of mining might as well be a foreigner hearing a strange tongue among a strange people. It is impossible to change the topic from the discussion of the experiences of the "Emerald" Mine, the prospects of "The Joker," or the richness of the specimens brought in from some new find. Yalgoo folks have only one thought which haunts them by day, and of which they appear to dream by night—the seductive vision of "making a rise." Some of them have "made a rise." The Yalgoo mines are undeveloped it is true, yet many of them are of such promise, that very high expectations are formed of what the batteries will disclose in the near future.

"WELKIM TO YALGOO."

Stay! I have said that there is no pastime at Yalgoo, except to talk of gold. I thought so when I set the words down, but what is this that is revealed by the rising sun, while we are taking an early airing. The aviary of a poultry raiser? No, by all that is passing strange, it is a tennis court. Surely, we must be dreaming. The mere thought of agility in pursuit of the bounding ball in the burning sun, puzzles the will. Are visions about? Nay, there are the orderly white-lined squares, and here, palpable to the touch, are racquets and a ball. Marvellous to relate, the people of Yalgoo do play tennis. At least two of them do. The names of these Salamanders these intrepid Englishmen, whose manly love of sport no enervating heats, no expatriation to the desert wilds can tame—are Mr. Gray, the Government Registrar, and Mr. Forbes, accountant at the "Emerald" Mine.

It was evening when we pulled up in front of Henty's Hotel, and every miner in the district appeared to be hanging around the door to have a look at us. One very disreputable Irishman, who had just got over an attack of *delirium tremens*, and was bordering on the next attack, was particularly pleased to see us. We would willingly have avoided this unpleasant specimen had it been possible. He was caked with dirt from his ear to his heels, and like Kipling's camel, he "stunk most awful vile," but he planted himself in the front rank, and as we dropped off the coach he seized each of us in turn, exclaiming in unmistakable Irish, "Welkim' friends! Welkim to Yelgoo! Do yez want to buy a mine?" We afterwards learned that he was as near sober as he had ever been since he arrived on the Murchison.

On our return journey from Cue, we encountered in the same place another poor devil very far gone in the liquor habit. He was dancing wildly under the broiling sun, flinging his hat into the air and jumping upon it when it fell. He came very near to being run over, for his evolutions were spread over the middle and both sides of the track, and our horses, who were not so accustomed to such an exhibition as might have been expected of them, reared and plunged furiously as they passed him. Having wound himself up to a fine pitch of madness, the poor wretch left his hat, and seizing a huge piece of quartz threw it high above his head. As it descended he struck it heavily with his bare knuckles, and the blood gushed out as he hit the stone. Then he left the road and made for the open country, tearing off his coat as he went.

This was but one of many instances that came under our notice on the goldfields. *Delirium tremens* under the West Australian sun spells death! The majority of the victims end by taking to the bush, and stripping off their clothes as they go, they run on and on until they fall from sheer exhaustion. Some are recovered alive; others return as if by a miracle, and then generally mad, but the majority are discovered dead—their bodies broken and cut with the stony ground, their flesh, covered with myriad insects, rotting in the sun.

A MOMENT WITH THE MAP.

Chapter 12.

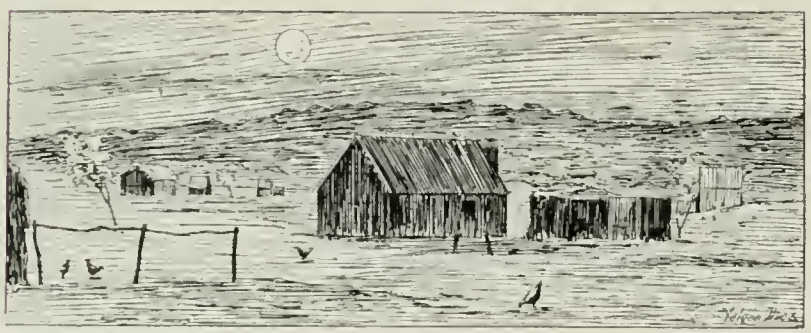
The Post and Telegraph Master at Yalgoo—The Butcher's Deputy—Westralian Troopers—The Gold Escort—A Reminiscence of the Australian Bushrangers—At Deep Well—An African Princess—Monbenia, and our Hosts there—"Shoo Fly!"—Badger's Cross—Fitzgerald's Station.

BEAUTY UNADORNED.

IT is worth the price of a message to get into the canvas telegraph office, and see the occupant of this official St. Helena, who is lately from Melbourne. The young Victorians who are immured in the telegraph offices of the goldfields, literally bearing the heat and burden of the day, must ardently wish themselves back in the fair land of the Eastern Colony. Or rather they would, if they were not sustained by the enthusiasm and the strength of youth, and the hope of speedy promotion. The crude service, the irregularities of the lines, which are laid for long distances without repeating stations, and the rough living of the operators, weigh heavily upon the recruits from "the other side," who have come over in large numbers since Victoria fell upon evil days. These juniors are "under the harrow" in their new sphere of labour. Yet the training is a splendid one to make them self-reliant men, and to cure them of foppery, if they ever cultivated any coeval with the appearance of a callow moustache. There is no room for coxcombry when a young fellow has to grill his own chop—if he is lucky enough to be able to get one—and make his own bed on the rude stretcher placed beside his telegraph instrument. It is hard to maintain the red-tape dignity of the dual office of post and telegraph master, in a coarse shirt without a collar, and a pair of trousers. Little fear that the new man will be spoiled by falling into a "lazy Government stroke" when he has to do the work of two men, and "keep on the job" till far into the night, in order to be able to do so. Any leaning towards effeminacy on the part of a youth, who, until he got his new billet, had perhaps been wont in his leisure hours to worship beauty on "The Block," or to display his figure in a ball-room, is shattered while he is graduating in his hard school of experience. In spite of its seamy side, the alert young officer at Yalgoo is glad of his place in an expanding service, and will not admit that he ever has a sense of desolation in his weird environment, but he has hung the walls of his tent profusely with photographs of brighter scenes, full of tender memories. We gather from him that a Government officer on the goldfields should be "general utility man"—to borrow a phrase from the "green-room"—he should be full of

resource, and have the temper of a saint. He has as many roles as there are hues in the rainbow, and more "crosses" every day of his life than there are in a lover's letter. The hero who sings in "Bab Ballads" that he "is the crew of the *Nancy* brig, the cook, and the captain too," is the prototype of such an officer.

The meat supply of Yalgoo has a very watchful guardian. To all appearance the butcher leaves his business to take care of itself, and gives a tacit invitation to every passer-by to help himself to a joint. The weather being tropical, the door is open all night; there are no windows or shutters in the front. The steaks, the legs, the sirloins, are temptingly within reach, but yet "you may look, but you musn't touch," as the discreet young lady said to an admirer who wanted to kiss her. A pair of sleepless eyes, and lips twitching nervously over gleaming fangs, are crouched behind the chopping block. A deep growl, as you pause to glance at the meat, says ominously: "Boss is out; call again." A step over the threshold, and "Get out," is savagely hissed through clenched teeth; another step and there is a spring, and distended jaws give you a last chance to retreat from the execution of the threat, "If you don't get out I'll put you out." All the gold in the Yalgoo mines might be safely left in that butcher's shop that is left to take care of itself.



YALGOO. MURCHISON GOLDFIELD.

Not far from Yalgoo we met the gold police escort, convoying the mail coach. A trooper with a revolver in his hostler, and a repeating rifle in the "bucket" of his saddle, rode a few yards in advance of the vehicle. On the coach beside the driver sat a senior constable, in the blue uniform of the foot police, and also fully armed. The mounted constabulary wear a short blue jacket, white pants, and knee boots. They are a good class of men, but are not like the Victorian troopers, an object of popular pride. The Victorians bear much the same relation to the mounted policemen of any of the other Colonies, that the Royal Horse Guards do to the Lancers. The Melbourne trooper is a model of equestrian grace. A rider from his boyhood, he has added to the firm seat of the recruit from the country all the accomplishments of the *haute ecole*. He is a picked man on a picked horse. His drill, his accoutrements, his military setting-up, would please the most exacting martinet. He is always mounted on a big, high-mettled charger, that curvets foam-flecked, pirouetting its way along the thoroughfares, while his rider in top-boots, that shine like a mirror, and in a uniform that, even to the white gloves, is the special admiration of the Duke of Edinburgh, and suits him like a Bucephalus. His Western representative, who bestrides a common hack, and whose clothes are not made by a military tailor, may do more useful work, especially on escort duty, which the close network of Victorian railways has rendered obsolete in that Colony; but as an artistic

ORIGINAL CAMP OF WILSON AT DAY DAWN.

THE KINSELLA MINE.

study he is a failure beside the dashing Eastern corps, which Captain Standish, a veteran cavalry officer, bestowed in his time as much pains upon as did Frederick of Prussia upon his brigade of tall soldiers.

So far, no gold escorts from any of the fields have met with bushrangers, as the highwaymen of other parts of the Australian bush are called. The exploits of desperadoes like "Starlight," John Dunn, "Thunderbolt," and the Kelly gang, which have had much to do with the maintenance of a superior body of troopers "down East," would hardly have been possible in Western Australia, on account of the nature of the country. In the desert the bushranger could not get away with his loot, no matter how successfully he might raid a coach, or rob a travelling party of miners. He must make for water, and the summer watering places are so few and so well known, that he could be shot down or captured like a kangaroo or wild dog, by ambushed police, while he was slaking his thirst.

FRESH FROM CALIFORNIA

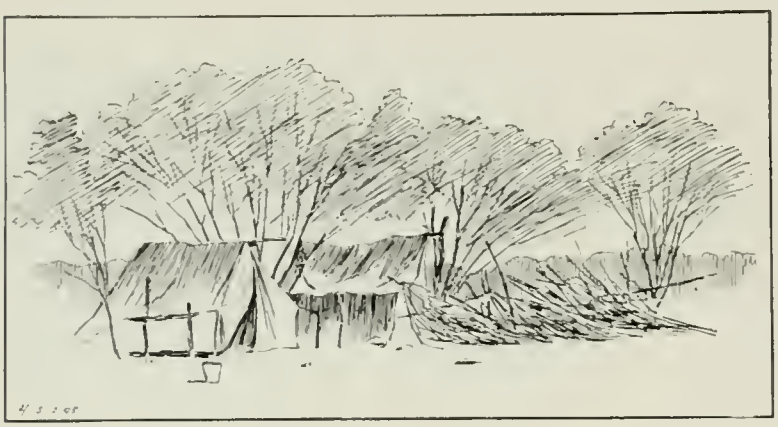
To forcibly contrast the difference between the Colony of which we write and her neighbours, let us suppose that, tempted by the heavy yields of the Yilgarn or North-West goldfields, a band of ruffians determine to seize the treasure. To "take to the bush"—as in local parlance a robbery under arms is called—would be easy enough without exciting suspicion, if they called themselves prospectors, and purchased stores and horses under that disguise. They would have to buy, not steal their horses, as a Ned Kelly, a Harry Power, or a Gardiner would have done, because around the homestead of the Western squatters there are none of the well grassed, securely fenced "home paddocks"—in which the best hacks can be got at a moment's notice—which are invariably to be found enclosing the head-quarters of the Southern runs. Morgan, the miscreant, while he was outlawed with a large price set upon his head, was fatally shot through the back, while he (Morgan) was selecting a fresh mount in the "home paddock" of a station near Wangarratta, Victoria. So as to be able to pick a good horse at his leisure, he had first "stuck-up" the homestead, and placed the inmates of the house and all the hired men who were in the vicinity, under lock and key. The manager, with a loaded revolver pointed at his head, had been taken by Morgan into the paddock show, to aid in catching the best horse on the place. A shepherd happened at the moment to be coming in for provisions,

HUMPIE ON THE CUE TRACK. (PINDAH).

and, seeing the manager and the ruffian mustering the horses, took in the situation at a glance, for Morgan had long been the terror of the neighbourhood. He crawled under cover to the house, got a gun, and, from behind a tree, aimed it so well, that he earned £1,000 by the shot, and afterwards died insane of remorse, for having taken "blood money" without, as he used to say, "Given Morgan a chance to fight for his life;" but the public, it may be added, never shared in the repentant shepherd's nice scruples, concerning methods of manly combat with the merciless scourge of the country. But in Western Australia a Morgan would find the horses "out on the run." It would take a black trapper to find them, and then perhaps the faithful Jim or Pete, divining the drift of affairs, might for once find himself strangely at fault in getting on a trail. When at last the horses were got in, they would be found to be unshod, nearly all unbroken, and the quiet ones probably in low condition, from hard riding. The half-bred blood horse, with the speed of a plater, and the endurance of a Sioux, on which Morgan used to defy the well-mounted police to catch him, would not be found in a Western stock-yard. Evidently, then, the only way to get horses for a foray would be to buy them, and in the buying, the purchasers would become marked men. As soon as their first cry, "Bail up," was heard on the road, every peaceable man would be turned into a detective; the detailed descriptions of the horses and their riders, spread broadcast, would reveal them wherever they were seen. They would be hunted with the pertinacity of the sleuth hound; they could not leave the watered tracks nor get a rest for their hard run and ill-fed steeds. The police would be better mounted than their quarry, and they would have the services of eager lynx-eyed native trackers, zestful as a high-spirited pointer in quest of quail, while in numbers the odds of the pursuers would be twenty men to one. But the character of the back-country affords the best protection against armed lawlessness obtaining a foot-hold. The bushranger, even if he had his saddle bags stuffed with gold, would be in a trap. In the dry season drought would find him out; in the winter a mole could see his trail in the wet ground. There is no food in the uninhabited wilderness, and no sympathisers, tempted by his booty, to warn and nourish him, as the Kelly gang were aided. Hunger and thirst would hem him in, to give him the choice of surrender, or of "doing a perish" in the almost trackless wastes. The modern Dick Turpin flourished in the other Colonies, where water was plentiful, on secret supplies; he "flew light," lived well, made short cuts across a country which he knew thoroughly, and, doubling with the cunning of a fox frequently, for a long time baffled his pursuers. In Western Australia, as I think I have shown, all prospect of successful bushranging is barred by the hand of Nature, and the lonely character of the country.

AN EYE FOR THE KANGAROO.

But although the gold escort is not likely to see active service, their ride is not a picnic. The duty calls for active, willing, hardy men, who, like their native horses, are inured to heat, long stages, and hard fare, if not short commons. The journey from Cue to Mullewa, a distance of nearly two hundred and fifty miles, is done by "reliefs," who take up the "running," as the different police districts are passed through. Mount Magnet, Yalgoo, and Mullewa, each furnish a contingent of the escort. It is the practice of the police and the driver to sleep around the coach, as the "Chain Pump" Hotel is the only "strong-room" on the route, that is better than a hessian hut. A thief in the night would have to be very stealthy indeed, to remove any of the heavy bullion boxes from the "boot" of the coach without stirring the guard, no matter how deeply it might be wrapped in slumber after the fatigues of the day. The protection is ample under the circumstances. There is little pretence that the gold could be maintained against a strong armed gang of freebooters, but for the reasons which have been briefly glanced at, such a descent is no more likely to make its appearance than a heavy rainfall. If the escort stood in any danger of an attack in force, the attempt would not be made at a camping place, where shots would be exchanged, and probably blood lost on both sides. The modern Robin Hood would doubtless seize the opportunity to ambush his men behind some of the huge rocks along the road, which at some spots are numerous enough to afford cover for a hippodrome. These natural fortresses for guerilla warfare—if an invader of the Colony ever made his way so far into the interior—would be splendid rallying places for sharpshooters. The rifleman, himself invisible, and protected by the towering rocks, could fire through the loopholes of the crevices with a deadly aim. A police escort could be wiped out at point-blank range by a volley, before they had the slightest suspicion of the presence of an enemy, just as Sergeant Kennedy and his men were slaughtered in cold blood by the Kelly gang, when they went to arrest Ned Kelly, who, at the outset of his bloodthirsty career, was "wanted" on a charge of horse stealing. The plan of that hideous massacre would have disgraced an Afghan. The caretaker of a camp was captured, and compelled to decoy his comrades close to the hidden rifle muzzles of the butchers, as he related, when, almost miraculously, he managed to make his escape on one of the horses, which was left riderless by the murderous fusilade. The frowning rocks which we closely pass upon the road would be a fitting scene for such a savage deed. Behind them the assassin, white or brown, would find the theatre of another tragedy of Majuba Hill.



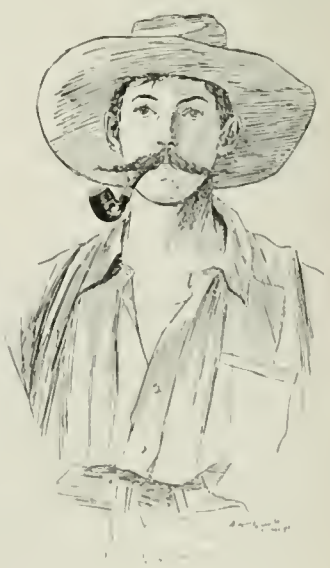
AT DEEP WELL, DEC. 3, '95. (CUE TRACK).

COSSACK, NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA

DERBY, NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA.

The "Deep Well" is the next oasis beyond Yalgoo. Here, an African negro named Russell, keeps a hut that in this dreary land is called a wayside house for the accommodation of travellers, meaning a canvas "humpy," that it would be flattery to call a tent. Russell, when we drive up to his cabin, is nursing his baby, as he has no customers to attend to, and no liquor to sell them if he had. What is used for a cellar, a hot, rough shelf, in the so-called apology for a bar, is bare. The sight of a tethered sheep is like corn in Egypt. The starving animal has been tied up till the larder shall want replenishing, but Russell says it will only "lose a little fat" by the time he puts the knife into it. He is too affectionately engrossed in his daughter to bestow a thought upon a famishing sheep. The young lady, a few months old, is certainly a little black diamond. She is chubby and bright eyed, and has curly hair as black as the raven's wing. If her lips are too thick, and her nose rather flat for the lines of beauty, she is healthy, winsome, and full of glee. We learn that her full name is Isabel Victoria Adelaide Maude Jane Russell. She crows joyfully, and is wreathed in smiles. The proud father is well pleased when one of our party takes her in his arms; he is delighted when we all say that Bella is a nice child, but when the artist proposes to make the little Prairie Flower the subject of a sketch, the ebony skin of the ecstatic parent shines with rapture. Our friend referred to is fond of children. The laughing Bella touches a chord of tenderness—he will hold her while the picture is being made. At this announcement Russell rises to the seventh heaven of delight. The artist, with the deft stroke of his graphic pencil, has put in the first few touches of the outline of the portrait, while we look on. But Russell, grimacing frightfully to "make Bella look pretty," is the best study. See his gleaming white teeth, his jaws snapping like a trapped dingo, and his tongue protruding till it shows the root darting in and out to avoid being bitten, like the fang of a hissing snake. He writhes his body into surprising contortions, and makes a "Catherine wheel" of his head, his eyes in fine frenzy rolling, his fists clawing the air. Hear his deep growls, which he means to be the crooning accents of a lullaby. Any white child would be frightened into convulsions by such grotesque agonies, but Bella only crows more gleefully than ever. The picture is a triumphant success, and Russell, satisfied that it upholds the honour of his house, heaves a deep gutteral sigh of relief after his amazing exertions, and goes out to lap up a long drink out of the bucket of his well. Then, in a high state of exultation and good humour, he zealously entertained

SAM RUSSELL'S BABY—



—AND HER ADMIRER.

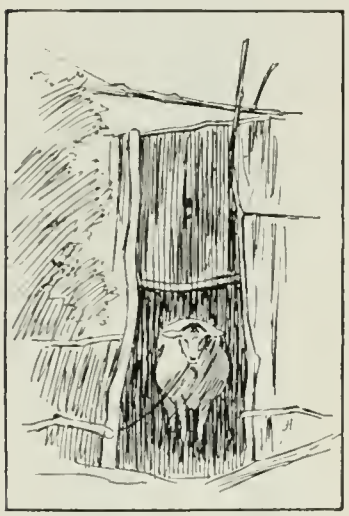
us, and especially the artist, to the best of his scanty resources. He would have killed the fatted calf in our honour to show his gratitude, only that there is not a calf either fat or lean to be found in any part of the Murchison.

The changing stations of the coaches where we get our relays of horses, at Mondenia, are the homes of some queer people. The old couple whom we see at the next stopping place, have drifted into a strange haven, after a long voyage on the ocean of life. They are natives of Russia, both apparently on the wrong side of seventy years of age, but the old lady's natural force has not abated, nor her eye grown dim. Spare, active, and forceful of will, she is manager, head ostler, granary-superintendent, cook, housemaid, housekeeper, and hostess of coach travellers, and something more than the counsellor of her nominal lord and master. She takes the lead in unharnessing and putting in the horses; her spouse humbly carries out her sharply delivered orders, and is thankful if her tongue confines itself to orders. Woe betide him, if the off leader is led up on the near side, or if his palsied fingers should buckle a strap into the wrong hole. That woman could rule an army; she is a Napoleon in petticoats; her splendid talents are wasted on the desert air in keeping the model stable on the road. She should be wielding a sceptre instead of polishing horses' coats.

SAM RUSSELL.

Just about the camp of the Russians the traveller begins to feel an aching void, and takes in a reef in his waist-belt. He is too far back, and not far enough forward to be well fed. Mullewa, where a decent meal could be got, is a long way behind, and Cue, which would receive him at a well-filled board, is nearly a hundred miles in front. The border land of semi-starvation, is about midway between those towns. At every stage of the long ride the dietary scale has been growing more slim. A little way out from Mullewa, we sat down to mutton, onions, potatoes, bread, jam, and tea. Further on the onions disappeared, next the potatoes vanished; later, mutton became an unattainable luxury, until at last our Russian landlady gave us as the only dinner bill of fare which her larder could provide for six hungry men—a few spoonfuls of jam and a mutilated loaf of bread. It was not her fault that the cupboard was so bare. The waggon teams laden with everything that the appetite could desire, from Bologna sausages to champagne, go by her door, but they pass on like merchantmen at sea from the sight of a ship-wrecked crew. A minnow is no good to those who are fishing for whales, and the teamsters do not care to have to throw off a network of lashings to hunt for a few cases addressed to the feminine dictator at the well. The hungry visitor, who has breakfasted badly, and lunched worse, feels a ravenous desire to broach the

travelling commissariat as it lumberingly goes by, and would rob an orchard with as little compunction as a schoolboy, if he could find one on the way. Even the flies are hungry in this God-forsaken place, and flock round in dense clouds to share our slender store of bread and jam. They encompass the "humpy" like darkness, swarm inches thick on the sweets, as the scrap of bread is being raised to the mouth, and choke the throat when the lips are parted to bite the crust. The insects fill the eyes, the nostrils, and afflict every sense. The plague of flies must have been one of the worst tribulations of the much-suffering Egyptians. I should think that Japan, the land of the fan, must be infested with flies like these. The Murchison substitute for the fan is to slap the face incessantly with both hands until every perspiring feature is as red and nearly as raw as a beef-steak. On the road we leave most of the flies behind. There is nothing to eat away from the bread and jam, and as we take our seats on the coach, the clusters of winged tormentors are busy consuming the last crumb of the meal, which even Pascal would have deemed frugal enough for the most austere day of penance. On our return journey we stayed the night at Mondenia, and our supper and breakfast consisted again of bread and jam. By the light of the coach lanterns we ate heartily of both the viands provided for us, but in the morning we confined our attention to the bread. What we had cheerfully taken over-night to be jam, we found in the morning was about one-half flies, and on that experience we made a rule, and zealously adhered to it, never again to eat jam by candle-light.

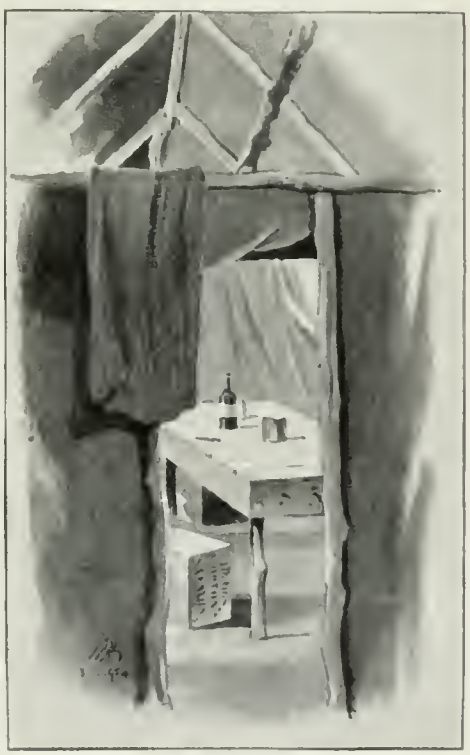


MUTTON FOR THE PANTRY AT DEEP WELL.

The country is now getting hilly, and rocks interspersed with five different kinds of strata, come into view. The chocolate plains we have been driving over, merge into sandy stretches, which make the going very heavy for the horses. Presently we are on a belt of territory, covered with round white quartz stones, which makes it resemble the laying ground of millions of ducks. Onward a few miles, the pearly quartz balls are succeeded by a prospect of red ironstone gravel, the pebbles being of all sizes, from that of a walnut to a cricket ball. Then the kaleidescope of the Murchison changes to a view far as the eye can reach, of a surface whitened as though by hailstones, so dazzlingly spotless, so round, uniform in size, and evenly spread, are the lustrous marbles upon the ground. At intervals we drive in the grateful shade of masses of rocks, some of which are tossed into the most fantastic shapes, apparently by volcanic action. One of them is known by the name of "The Devil's Card Table." The stone is exactly the shape of a giant mushroom. If it were painted of a mushroom hue, the resemblance would be perfect. There is the round, slightly convexed top, and the stem stuck underneath it right in the centre, exactly the counterpart of a mammoth fungus. "The Devil's Card Table" is large enough for a whole Pandemonium of arch fiends to sit at it, if they doffed their wings while re-visiting the glimpses of the moon. The rocky camp stools against the table would be cozy for the party, and the gloomy surroundings of this desolate spot would surely make the Satanic

guests feel quite at home, while there would be no danger of Apollyon and his friends taking a chill during their excursion to so warm a climate.

"Badger's Cross" is one of the places where the prospector has not sought in vain for gold. If the reef from which the camp received its name goes on carrying as much of the precious ore as it did on the outcrop, Badger will be a made man. When we drove by he was engaged upon a trial shaft. The camp is on the summit of an upland, and commands one of the few picturesque outlooks that are to be seen between Mullewa and Cue. The eye roves over a wide extent of valley and mountains, enveloped with blue haze, which soften their outline, and etherealises the landscape. The tents of the miners are standing within a short distance of the road, on the borders of which they have set up a beer case on a pole, to receive the post when their friends bear them in mind, which, if they are returned miners, they always do. Only those who have been through the fiery furnace of life in the far West, can even faintly realise how eagerly the weekly mail-bag is awaited at the Badger's Crosses of the wilderness, how fondly the wanderer looks forward to the day when he may get a letter from home. Only those who, through the slowly creeping hours has wielded a pick or a drill, until the hand trembles and the sweat runs into the eyes, and the heart is faint with exhaustion and bad food, and there is not water for a wash, can conceive the cheering effect of a letter, that is opened by the light of the solitary candle in the tent, to him who sits on his wretched pallet to scan the lines of friendship or affection. Those lines are the one link—except the hope of "striking it rich"—that binds him to all that makes life worth living—comrade, home, wife and child. The letter is read and re-read; it is carried in the pocket till it is wet with the dew of toil, and the writing grows yellow in the torrid sun. Each mail day at Badger's Cross, as the sun is sinking low in the heavens, a crowd of dirty sun-stained miners, fresh from the gold workings, make their way to the beer case, nailed to the pole on the road that the coach has passed by. The lid is wistfully opened, and a cold chill of disappointment strikes like a blow on the heart when the rude post-office is seen to be empty, and the words are heard —"There's nothing to-night, lads; better luck next week."



DINING SALOON, MONDENIA—ON THE "CUE" TRACK.

Fitzgerald's station is the boundary line of the pastoralists on the Murchison. On the northern side of that line there is plenty of unoccupied Crown land, which might be leased for sheep raising at a very low rent, but no one seems to want so remote and barren a grazing area. It would cost a good deal to sink wells, and without wells stock could not

exist. The Government have been liberal in their expenditure to find water for keeping the roads open. A few of the wells on the Cue road belong to Mr. Gascard, the coach proprietor, who, of course, has had to provide water at every "changing station." The water at the Government wells is free to all who like to draw it, there being no reservoir and no caretaker. Every driver hauls up as many buckets of water as his team will drink, and then he leaves the trough empty for the next comer. But new ropes and buckets are from time to time provided by the Public Works Department, as the old ones become useless; they never have any losses from dastardly theft, for there is a very strict code of honour on the goldfields, which is maintained by the men themselves in a very summary way. A sneak who made free with any of his neighbour's goods, would have to clear out of camp at a minute's notice, under pain of consequences, if he did not go, which would leave him in an unfit condition to travel.

JOSEPH BADGE, PROSPECTOR OF THE 10-MILE CUE TRACK.

SOME REAL AUSTRALIAN CRICKET AN INCIDENT IN THE GOLDFIELDS

Chapter 13.

Bill-posting Extraordinary—Camel Transport on the Murchison—Tagh and Faiz Mahomet—The Afghan Knot—Moonlight on the Murchison—Mount Magnet—Mine Host of the One-and-All Hotel—The Prohibition List—"The Island," and "The Mainland"—Day Dawn—Arrival in Cue.

WHEREVER we pass a majestic landmark on the Murchison route, we find that it has been turned to mercenary account. The travelling paint slinger has left his hoarding announcements on walls of granite, that will stand to the end of time. The "artist," emulously seeking a stupendous vantage ground, did not carry enough colour to paint, in proportion to his "canvas," for already some of his letters, six feet long, are fading into indistinctness, which mercifully spares the aching eye of the passing traveller, to whom the merits of "Pears' Soap" and "Monkey Brand" are a maddening horror. The soaring dauber, judging from the dizzy altitude of his sweeping brush, must have been a fire brigade man or a steeple climber. Although we owe him no good-will for his desecration of the monoliths, it is only fair to say that his acrobatic daring fully earned his fee, although the world is unhappily not much the wiser for his work.

Camel trains do a great deal of the Murchison carrying trade, under the auspices of the firm of Tagh and Faiz Mahomet. Cue is one of their strongholds, and they are reputed to have prospered exceedingly through the development of the Murchison fields. It was here that they began business in a very small way, and met with a great deal of prejudice on account of their colour. It is said that the enterprising Afghans started with only a couple of camels—because the storekeepers refused to supply their wants. The whirligig of time has brought its revenge, and now the firm largely supply the whites. The original pair of camels have, by breeding and importation, multiplied into a herd of many hundreds, and the contents of the two packs into the stock-in-trade of extensive stores. At one time held in contempt, some of the ablest business brains to be found in the far West are now in the service of the Afghan house, which at Geraldton is the agent of one of the largest of the intercolonial lines of steamers. By sound management, commercial acumen, and what is called "good luck," in taking the tide of prosperity at its flood, the brothers became a potent factor in opening up the Murchison district, large employers of labour, and dictators in determining the freight rates between Mullewa and Cue. In addition to their business ability, it is evident that, in spite of the contumely with which their colour was at

first regarded, the Mahomets owed much of their early progress to their nationality, for it made them *au fait* with all that related to the camel, and the camel has coined money for his owner in Western Australia. As soon as they had launched their initial venture they saw their advantage, and made the most of it with characteristic generalship. The Europeans knew nothing of the management of the hump-backed beast of burden, and still less of Afghan drivers, their low wages, and more than all, their peculiar knack of getting the best work out of a camel. There are white men on the goldfields who boast that they can handle a camel as well as any Afghan, but this is a delusion, as any observer will perceive. Are horses the same in all hands? Did not Lindsay Gordon and Fred Archer win many a race on horses, that with another rider in the saddle had never shown the same speed or gameness?

Just as there is in temperament and will power something that makes a great horseman—for Gordon's seat was far from perfect—so the camel driver who is worthy of the name has a persuasive gift of his own, for the camel has a most uncertain temper. To keep him in a willing humour for his work, to be able to quicken his flagging pace without making him sulky, it is necessary to have been born and reared in the East, and, above all, to be of the slow, patient, quiet, persistent nature, that is inherited by the Afghan. For a swarthy native of his own country the camel will make his most faithful effort, will go the longest stages on very little food, and lose no condition through fretting. How little he likes a white keeper, is best shown by the result of the attempt of one of the leading Murchison residents to possess himself of a champion hack-camel. The aspirant for something choice in hump-backed steeds, had a long journey to go to inspect some new areas upon which mining leases had been taken up. The track lay through some very dry country, where a horse would be useless. He had been in the habit of riding a camel, but had never been able to get one to please him. Somehow the best recommended of his mounts always fell short of the warranty, and yet, as his time was valuable, he was willing to pay a good price for one that would "fill the bill." At last he seemed to have been successful in his search. A head man of Tagh and Faiz Mahomet was reported to have a wonderful hack, on which he was able to get between Mullewa and Cue in record time. The Cue man satisfied himself that the report was true. He found in a trial "go" that the paces of this long-legged Carbine were of the easiest, and as the hack seemed well-nigh perfect he offered a tempting figure for him. The head man did not want to part with his favourite. The price was made more tempting, till, like that of the Duke of Portland, when he had set his mind upon depriving Australia of the great son of Musket and Mersey, the gold proved irresistible. No business firm could refuse such an offer, and Tagh and Faiz Mahomet were business men of the highest class. The cheque was accepted, and the head man ordered to hand over his charge to the exultant purchaser, who lost no time in

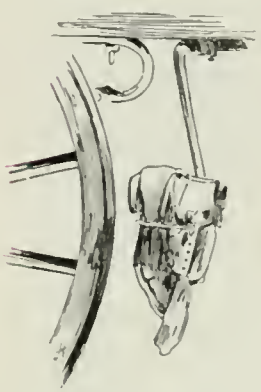
A MINER AT BADGER'S CROSS.

RESIDENCE OF MR. AUGUSTUS S. ROE, ROEBOURNE.

OFFICE AND STAFF OF *Northern Public Opinion*, ROEBOURNE.

setting out upon his travels. The fame of the celebrated camel had preceded him. Aforetime when, with his old master in the saddle, the hardy active beast had started from Mullewa with his sprightly amble, camel and rider could be timed to arrive at Cue with the punctuality of a chronometer in seventy hours. The new rider's first trip was therefore talked of in Cue, and, relying upon his well-tried mount, he, with every confidence, promised to keep appointments to the hour with his clients at certain places. But he did not keep to time, even on the first stage. The celebrated camel, Sahara, was no sooner on the road with his new rider, than he appeared to be a very ordinary brute. He had lost his long swinging lissome gait; and worse than all, there seemed to have gone with it the hoofs that had never tired, the pluck that never before had failed him. In a word, that camel, the best one that Tagh and Faiz had ever imported, would not carry the white man "kindly:" and the more he flogged to make him keep up his reputation, the more Sahara did to lose it. Sahara was a white elephant to his new owner, who, persuaded that a camel requires a coloured rider, if not a coloured driver, he let the head man have him back again at a considerable reduction upon the purchase money. But even supposing that I should have failed to convince the sceptic that a European cannot drive a camel train as far, quickly, or with as little loss of condition as an Afghan, will anyone contend that the former is the equal of his dark-skinned rival in loading up? The Davenport Brothers used to defy even sailors to tie a knot that they, while bound hand and foot, could not escape from. Luckily for these famous showmen, colour prejudice prevented an Afghan camel driver trying his hand at any of the séances, out of which the slippery gentlemen (in the acrobatic sense of the word) made a fortune. An Afghan's knots are like a hangman's noose, tightening their hold the more they are wrenched.

"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE"—AURIFEROUS?

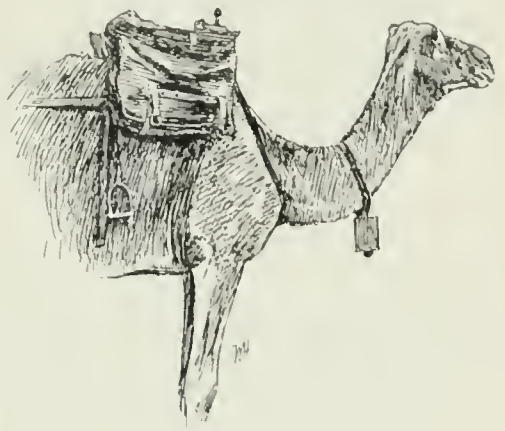


A VALUABLE UNDERSTANDING.

Only once did we see a pack in the slightest disorder, and even the disarranged load clung to the animal it was fastened upon like a saddle on a Queensland colt, when, having thrown his rider, he is trying to perform the operation known as "bucking himself through the girths." The incident is worth relating, as it goes to prove the truth of what I said in a previous chapter, that there is no love lost between the Britisher and the alien in Western Australia. In front of our coach a long train of camels were striding across the plain fully loaded. The Afghan, seeing us coming, moved the camels to one side of the road, so that we should have plenty of room to pass on the middle of the highway. Our driver, in a malicious freak, whipped up his horses, and drove right along the line of camels, which were

jammed against the telegraph poles and the scrub, almost brushing them with the wheels, and slashing them with his whip as the coach rattled past. The galloping of the horses, the noise of the vehicle, the cutting whip, and the screeching of the driver, which might have been the war-cry of a Mohawk, routed the camels. In terrified confusion they wildly swerved, backed, and plunged in all directions, breaking nose-cords, doubling up the line, while some of the animals with loud bellowings of rage and terror stampeded into the bush. One young beast was quite uncontrollable, and the girth of the pack-saddle slipped until one side of the load was almost on the ground. But the pack, even in this extremity, fell as a whole; none of the lashings slipped, none of the knots loosened. The look which the Afghan cast after the author of the mischief as he ran to secure his camels was terribly expressive, even at a distance. I do not think the coachman would care to meet the driver whom he had so wantonly injured, on a dark night in a quiet place, if the Afghan had a knife.

Our time-table gave us ninety-three miles to travel, from Yalgoo to Mount Magnet, in the one day—a long stage in such a country and climate. The moon was shining brightly before "The Magnet" came into sight. It was the first time we experienced pleasure in travelling on the Murchison in the cool of the evening, when the air becomes almost bracing, and a rug is esteemed a friend. The refreshing nights greatly help a newcomer to become acclimatized to the enervating heats of the noon-tide sun. He can at any rate sleep soundly, but withal the most seasoned resident would be glad of a more kindly temperature in the day time. The American who could eat crow but "did not hanker after it," describes their feelings. They "grunt and sweat under a weary life," looking forward to the day when they will be able to live by cool pastures, and hear the music of gurgling brooks.



THE MAIL BAG.

But, abuse the country as we may, it looks beautiful on a moonlight night. The pale rays mask its ugliness, and paint a lovely phantom picture. The tristful scrub looks like bladed grass, decked with pearls. The pallid gleams open up enchanting glades on the barren road. The coach seems under Luna's light to be gliding through a vast orchard. The fruit trees, which by day are only stunted gums, are "tipped with silver." In the softening radiance of the shadow pantomime, all that is gross, and realistic, and scorching in the glower and the glare of the garish sun, is refined away. The scene powerfully recalled Southey's lines, as, mile after mile we sped with the breeze in our faces, and the shining panorama before us. How beautiful was night amid the "sweaty haste" of our rush to reach Cue in record time, a rush that "made night joint labourer with the day." The heavens were cloudless, and Nature was at rest. No other wheels broke the stillness of the road:—

A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven:
In full orbed glory, yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths;
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads
Like the round ocean girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!

At last a golden spangle shone in the midst of the phosphorescent glow like a ruby in a setting of pearls. It was the lamp over the portico of the Mount Magnet Hotel, the beacon that gave assurance of good quarters and good fare, and in a few minutes the steaming horses were drawn up in front of the verandah of the hostelry. Over the porch was the sign of the "One-and-All" Hotel. There is a good fellowship, a large-hearted invitation to eat, drink, and be merry, lurking in this device, that the generous girth and benevolent eye of the proprietor, Mr. Attwood, pleasingly sustains. He has no lean or hungry look. Let us have guests about us that are fat appears to be the cheerful motto of the establishment; "sleek-headed men such as sleep 'o nights," for both his table and his

MOUNT MAGNET. THE WARRAMBOO (NATIVE NAME).

beds are excellent. Our arrival, if we were to dine well, was inopportune. It was after ten p.m. The Chinese cook had gone to bed, and the housekeeper was chasing the merry hours with flying feet at a ball across the way, but the host was not to be baffled. We had barely time to have a wash before he set us down to a smoking board to break, very acceptably, a long fast, and to vary a *regimen* of bread and jam. Supper over, we peeped into the ball-room, in which the ladies were in a most triumphant minority. The terpsichorean favors of the fair ones were sought with ardour by suiters who disliked the role of masculine "wall-flowers," of whom perforce there were many each time a set was formed, or a waltz, or a polka began. Still the dancing went on merrily, and if the pianist who played the accompaniments had been making a fortune with his nimble fingers, he could not have been—to use a sporting phrase—a better "stayer." The light fantastic—or what passes for that poetic entity on a mining camp, where nothing more graceful than heavy boots can be got for airy motion on the roughly-timbered floor—was kept tripping with the

THE RELAXATIONS OF A WEST AUSTRALIAN JUDGE

NATIVE PRISONERS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

greatest spirit until "night's candles were burnt out and jocund day stood tip-toe on the misty mountain top" of "The Magnet." In the midst of the Murchison a ball is such a delightful rarity, that once it is started it is kept rolling a long time. But what did breaking up at daylight matter? The men would wash the sleep out of their eyes, and as for the girls they may go and dream of their conquests until they were quite refreshed. Lovely woman on "the diggings" is a divinity. She is a queen, absolute, omnipotent; if she chooses she may be imperious, and all men bow reverently at her feet.

While the strains of the piano were sounding, we were having a chat over a glass of wine with Mr. Attwood, who knows all about the mining operations of Mount Magnet. He saw the place in its cradle, and has helped to nurse it, until it is now able to run alone. No man is more enthusiastic about the district. He has seen gold in the reefs, and gold in the crushings, and is full of the faith that is begotten of the conviction that seeing is believing. "The Magnet" is the scene of all his investments, and they are turning out so well that he has no wish to put any of his money anywhere else than in the gold-bearing hills in the bosom of which he has made his home, and built his hotel. Our host has been a great traveller, and in his time has played many parts, from pearling and colonizing to reef-buying and public-house keeping. Not long ago he was in London and met mutual friends. He desires to give us every opportunity of forming a just estimate of the value of the Murchison Goldfields, and it is arranged that next day we shall visit several of the mines. After a very pleasant evening, we retire to forget, in the slumbers of Nature's sweet restorer, the long day's journey.

THE HOUSEKEEPER OF THE "ONE-AND-ALL" HOTEL.

After breakfasting, we had a look round Mount Magnet, and found that the "One-and-All" Hotel overshadows every other building in the township with its size and architecture. In the light of this discovery, the title of the hotel to which we had attached so much hospitable significance, may perhaps have had another meaning equally allegorical, but less flattering to a belated traveller. The thought strikes one that perhaps Mr. Attwood intended the nomenclature of the inn to typify its superiority. He may—in the spirit of the arrogant Van Tromp, who, boasting that he could sweep the English from the seas, put a broom at his masthead—have meant to symbolise that he and his hotel were "one and all" Mount Magnet. The place, like old Weller's wife at the tea-party, is "swelling visibly before our eyes," in the hands of a large body of artisans, but even with the addition of double the original number of rooms, it is likely to be a long time, so quick is the incoming of visitors, before the billiard tables will cease to be the repository of "shakedowns." The literary

taste of Mr. Attwood is exhibited in his excellent library, and it is a welcome sight to the visitor from London to see, upon the table of his sitting-room, the artistic pages of all the illustrated papers of the great city.

The police station is a little ugly wart on the picturesqueness of Mount Magnet. It is the most ludicrous travestie on a guard-house that was ever seen, for a prisoner need only stay with his captor as a matter of courtesy. The emblem of the law and the preservation of the peace of her Majesty's lieges has not even risen, at Mount Magnet, to the modest dignity of a tent; the station-house has been built by spreading a few yards of ragged bagging on a branch or two of gum tree. When it rains the records of offenders will be erased for ever, even as the oath of Toby's uncle, in *Tristram Shandy* was effaced by the tear of the recording angel who wrote it down. There is one man who must be eagerly looking for a shower. A soiled fag end of a scrap of paper, posted on the wisp of a door, solemnly sets out that P—— H—— is on the "prohibition list," which means that he must not touch, taste, nor handle the intoxicating cup for six months. The hotel keepers are warned not to assuage his thirst at the peril of a heavy fine. The paternal law hopes that when the six months have gone

THE BOUNDING KANGAROO.

FOUND.

by, the weak brother, who is thus "sent to Coventry," will not put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains. The official intimation that he is not to look upon the wine when it is red, or any other colour, appears side-by-side with the offer of a reward for the apprehension of a man suspected of murder. The placarding of a drunkard in

this way for the finger of scorn to point at, is, in a small community, a punishment severe enough, one would think, to cure the most confirmed fondness for "the devil in solution," or to drive him to suicide of a broken heart: but, at the time of our visit, he of the village pillory had refrained, with the stoicism of a Socrates, from adopting either alternative, sustained by furtive "nips" from travellers' flasks.

On leaving Mount Magnet, the road passes over leagues of stone-speckled, undulating country, interspersed, every fifteen or twenty miles, with the bark-roofed, hessian-walled changing stations, which are as much alike as one beggar is like another. It is not till Lake Austin is reached that there is anything to keep the passenger, who has now been more than two days on the road, from nodding. The country is so similar to that which he has been driving over for many weary hours that, if he had less confidence in the driver, he might imagine himself to be travelling in a circle. He is rocking in his seat, and bobbing his head so spasmodically as to be in danger of dislocating his neck, when a cry of "There's the lake," and a general movement to look out of the windows, arouses the sleeper to observe a new feature of interest. Lake Austin belies its name, for it is only an expanse of white sand. To all appearance it should be properly called a desert, but water can be obtained anywhere within the area of its bed by shallow sinking. The lake surrounds what is known as "The Island," a name that sets the school text-book definition of an island—"a piece of land surrounded by water"—at defiance. Perhaps the title was bestowed by an explorer, who, seeing the remarkable mirage for which the place is celebrated, mistook the reflection for water. "The Island" is a large hill of very desolate aspect, cheerless enough to give Momus himself a fit of the "blues." The sombre-looking stunted trees upon it only add to the forlorn appearance of the landscape. The coach crosses the lake upon an embankment which was made by the Government, and at the end of the made

NOTES OF CHARACTER HERE AND THERE.

road we approach what, in accordance with the nautical phraseology of the neighbourhood, is called "The Mainland." By "The Mainland," is meant the territory which, if Lake Austin was really a lake, would be opposite the eastern shore of "The Island." The situation will be understood if the geographical position of Sicily and Italy are borne in mind, Sicily

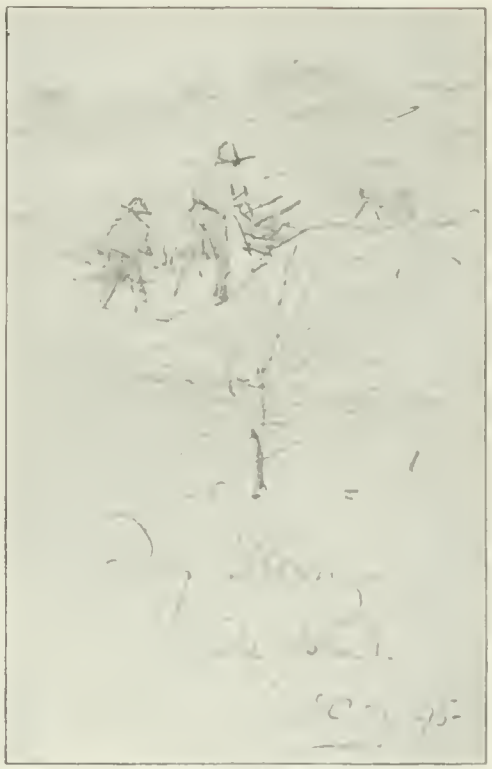
A NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIAN MEDICINE MAN.

A LETTER FROM HOME.

being "The Island" of the Murchison, and Italy "The Mainland"—a bold, flat-topped range of hills in which mining is profitably carried on. The place swarms with workers, the scene being a striking contrast to the solitudes which the visitor has passed through. The sides of the range are as full of holes and mounds as a rabbit warren, only the burrows and heaps are large enough to be the work of an elephant instead of a rodent. The alluvial miners are at work with the energy of our sappers making the approaches for the assault upon Sebastopol. They are as thick as bees around a hive, garnering a golden store. The dark-red loam, the hiding place of gold, has been delved and sifted to a depth of four or five feet. "Dry-blowers" lie thick upon the surface, as though half the Vulcans of the universe had come here to set up portable forges. As we drive up, the day is far advanced, but the miners are still at work shovelling and "rocking," enveloped in a cloud of chocolate dust, which, if they wore furs and were beardless, would disguise them as Pawnee savages. The men work in pairs, at each machine. With a swing, as regular as the momentum of movement of a pendulum, the alluvial is thrown into the metal sieve. But the monotony of the spade work is pyrotechnic compared with the measured working of the "rocker," by the man who, at the bellows, redeems the labour curse of Adam. Hour after hour that soul-destroying pull, pull, pull, on the handle, holds him until he must covet the excitement of a treadmill. A dry-blower would defy detection in a company of Italian marionettes, if he could show enough animation for the role of an automaton. A singular pair of mates drew our attention. One of them was an old man, bent double with years and infirmity. His silver hair and beard, and deeply furrowed face, and the skinny fingers with which he clutched the handle of the rocker, marked him out with pathetic emphasis, surrounded as he was by stalwart manhood. "In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows," he cast his eager looks intently into the "cradle," as though he would divine its store of gold dust, if haply it contained any, and yet so feebly did he work that the bellows blew only with a slow asthmatic breath, and he might search the box in vain for spoil. A lad, his grandson, threw in the stuff with a weary arm and dogged air. He was not more than twelve years of age, and the heavy miner's shovel was pushed into the heap of loam and gravel with stronger nerve than muscle. He was over young for a man's work, and the day had been long, but still the boy's heart was big with courage to help his grandfather to get bread. We went over and had a chat with him. It was "spec work," he said, and since—when he was a child—his grandfather was hurt in an accident underground, times had been a "bit hard." They could not put through so much stuff as the "other men," but sometimes they did not do so badly. To judge from his worn face and ragged garb, the slices of luck were few and far between, but the boy was as cheery as a sunbeam, and full of self respect.

A BOLT FROM THE BLACK.

Asked whether he was going to be a miner, he quietly replied, "I'm a miner already," and so he was if years of toil could make him one. I wondered if he had ever read of Charles Dickens' *Little Nell*, and drew inspiration from her courage, patience, sufferings, and fatigues, in her wanderings with her grandfather, whom she so nobly sustained.



SHORTHAND IN PASSING.

There is an hotel on "The Mainland," and several stores, which recall Booracoppin. Down in the hollow on the other side of the hill is the Mainland Consols Mine, which has been equipped with a valuable plant of machinery in full working order. But never was gold found in a more dour retreat; it might extort a moan from a hermit; no bird or beast, except the carrion vulture, haunts its dreary fastnesses. If Alexander Selkirk had been marooned here, he would have died of horror instead of writing a lament. The unwholesome brown colour of the hill, and of the rocks jutting out upon it—grey excoriations standing out upon the scarred, naked, desolate slopes, make "The Mainland" one of the most hideously depressing views that even Western Australia can exhibit. The road at the foot of the eminence is as a Valley of Despair leading to the Gates of Death. But, if from the ugly recesses of the Mainland Consols plenty of gold can be torn, the mine will be beautiful in the eyes of the shareholders, who will look elsewhere for eligible residential sites.

THE BELLE OF THE TOWNSHIP.

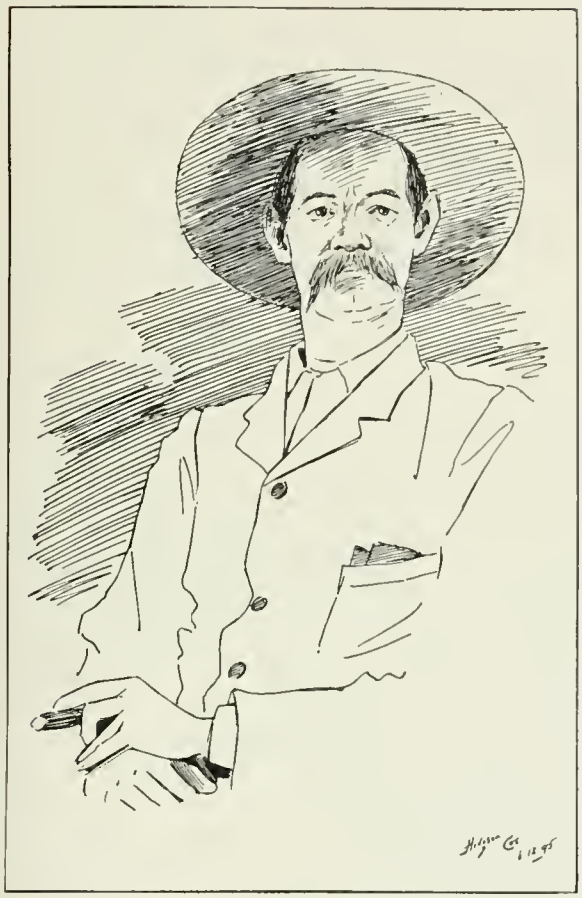
Long after dark, we heard the stampers at the Day Dawn Mine beating their noisy tattoo. The mine has given its name to a substantial township, almost in the centre of which the main shaft has been sunk. A wide circle of gleaming lights cheerily illumined the darkness, long before the coach stopped at the principal hotel. The house, a spacious stone one, was crowded with miners, who talked glibly of reefs and yields while they played "sixpenny nap." The bar was crowded; every one seemed to be flush of cash; gold and notes were freely changed for drinks. The hotel is the club, the music-hall, and the Parliament house of Day Dawn. A topic of animated conversation was the recent visit

of Sir John Forrest to the Eastern Goldfields. What the Premier had said at Coolgardie and "Hannan's" had been fully reported in that day's local paper, which, together with its readers, watches with a jealous eye the progress of Yilgarn. Murchison says it has been neglected by the Government, which is too solicitous of the interests of Coolgardie. As the older goldfield, she feels that the Cabinet is off with the old love in order to be on with the new, and she resents their coldness with all the fierceness of a woman scorned. To change the simile to more homely phrase, the Executive is accused of "greasing the fat sow." Sir John's doings on his tour were very displeasing. The company at the hotel read the paper in a carping spirit, and with many impatient interjections. What did Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie want? Why they must consider themselves the hub of the universe, from the demands they were making. A very "large order" indeed. What would they want next? The Premier must be very pliant to lend a willing ear to so many requests. But it was just like him to pave his way smoothly by making large promises. What need was there for him to go to the eastern districts at all, after all the water conservation, railway making, and telegraph extension that was being done? If he had come to the Murchison, which had been so sadly overlooked, it would have been seemly. But the Government would always shout with the biggest crowd, and add their influence to sensational newspaper writing for the aggrandizement of Coolgardie, while the Murchison, a sounder and better, if a less showy, goldfield, had to make its way in spite of many drawbacks.

CAPTAIN WALLACE, 74TH (SEAFORTH) HIGHLANDERS, AND DOG "DODGER." DAY DAWN.

After a short stay for refreshments, and hearing an expression of local opinion on how the goldfields should be managed by the Ministers in Perth, we drove to Cue, which is reached two and a half miles further on. Gascard's "special," with our party, had been expected, and so had the mining experts, Herr Schmeisser and his colleague, who had been sent out by Continental investors to make a thorough investigation of the auriferous areas of Western Australia. They had visited Coolgardie before us, and before we left Perth, had made their arrangements to inspect the Day Dawn and Murchison. Their horses were in the stable at Mullewa when we were there, and Cue had been looking for their coach for several days, but they preferred to travel in a far more leisurely fashion than our engagements permitted us to do. They were devoting as many months to getting over the ground as we had weeks to spare, and were able to move by easy stages, while we were outdoing all the traditions of the road. We, owing to the celerity of our movements and

independent equipment, were always taking people by surprise; the German experts were always too late for the dinner which had been prepared for them. There were cordial greetings for us at the Cue Hotel. The world is so small a place that we met several friends from some of the leading cities there. The town is full of men in flannel shirts, who, not long ago were to be seen in London, Paris, or Berlin, in frock coats and shiny stove-pipe hats, mingling with financiers, receiving instructions from leading corporations, exhibiting rich specimens, and promoting Companies. From a European city to Cue is an amazing transition, a startling change of environment, which it must call for a great deal of philosophy to bear. Mr. James Thomson, for example, is one of those who has seen many phases of life. He began life as a pressman, became secretary to several Royal Commissions in Victoria, visited India and London in connection with two Indian and Colonial Exhibitions, and came to Cue to start the *Cue Times and Day Dawn Gazette*, one of the brightest and best of the provincial journals of the Colony. Mr. Thomson is a Justice of the Peace, a trenchant and graphic writer, a graceful host, a witty after-dinner speaker, and a man who has hosts of friends. Mayor Gale is another of the social forces of Cue. His long black beard is the centre of every knot of good fellows, whose spirit of *camaraderie* drives away dull care at the northern capital. His force of character is recognised by every one but himself. The ratepayers are justly proud of him. As the chief magistrate of the district, he dispenses justice with an even hand, an excellent knowledge of the Police Offences Statute, and a clear mental grasp of the merits of evidence. No one gives us a warmer welcome than Warden Dowley. A successful goldfields warden is no ordinary man. His path is full of the pitfalls



MR. "JIMMY" THOMSON.

THE MAYOR OF CUE.

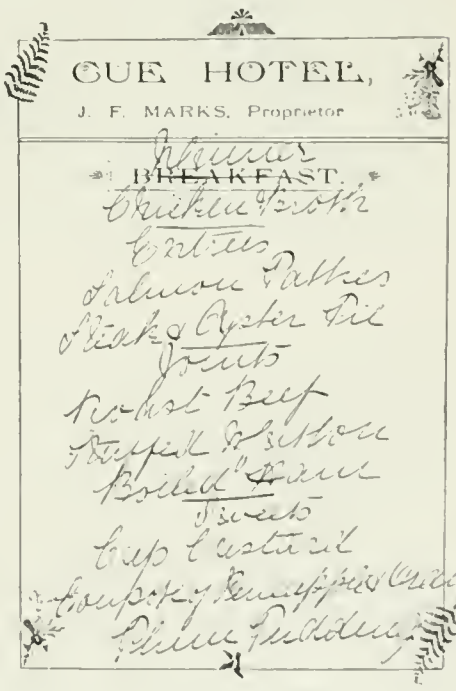
of the law, and of evil report. He has to be judge, jury, and administrator. At every sitting he has nice legal points to weigh, grave issues affecting the rights of valuable property to decide. He must do the right with rare sagacity, and without fear, favor, or affection. If he can discharge his onerous duty so as to stand in high repute among his fellow men, he is to be envied. Such a warden is Warden Dowley, of Cue. On every hand, if he were to retire to-morrow, would be heard the modern equivalent for the Scriptural commendation—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

A TROOPER.

Chapter 14.

Cue and Coolgardie Contrasted—An Appreciation of the Afghan—Lawler's—The Cue Public Swimming Bath—The Murchison as the Paradise of the Working Man—A Boundless Hospitality—Recollection of the Cue Track—A Eulogium of the Coach Service—A Mirage—The Murchison "Zoo"—A Race Against Time.

CUE IS a much better built town than Coolgardie. It has not been thrown together in such wild haste as the Golden City. Cue may be compared with a small, well-trimmed cottager's garden; Coolgardie to a large jungle. There are no hessian cabins in the main street of Cue. The thoroughfare is broad, clean, and lined with some buildings that would be an acquisition to Perth. The splendid pile of public offices should make the people of the Murchison ashamed to accuse the Government of illiberality. The various staffs are lodged, both officially and privately, like princes. The buildings, which are nearly as ornamental as the vice-regal residence, are constructed of a white stone that is plentiful in the neighbourhood. The stone is a first-class building material, with a texture something between that of granite and basaltic bluestone. There are reddish or deep orange tints running through it, which, when arranged in contrast on the façade, imparts to the front elevation an artistic appearance similar to that which is produced by mosaic tiling. It is as pleasing as a sight of home to see the masonry work in this land's end of civilization, after all the tents, the mia-mias, and the hovels made of potato sacks, and other odds and ends, tied together to degrade the home of Europeans to the level of the shelter of a wandering gipsy. The mason has found a long job at Cue at high wages.



A GOLDFIELDS' MENU.

An English Investment Company have been large employers. Their Commercial Chambers and a commodious hotel show what the directors think of the Murchison. In solid masonry, two storeys high, they have made an enduring record of their sanguine belief that Cue will become a great place. Those broad, high, palatial structures are an eloquent expression of faith that the sowing of British gold in the centre of the Northern Goldfields will yield an abundant harvest. Big oaks from little acorns grow. This was evidently the motto of the Government when the public offices were designed, but the lavish expenditure of a private Company is a far more satisfactory prediction of coming greatness, for capitalists look for profit on their outlay, and the Public Works Department does not. Near the Commercial Chambers in the main street are such further evidences of advanced civilization as a stationer's warehouse, a chemist's establishment, replete with resplendent colored waters encased in crystal, and a purveyor of iced drinks, who makes his ice on the premises. Cue is as fond of a brush as a thrifty house-wife. The town is made neat, not gaudy, with white paint or limewash, which, like charity, covers a multitude of blemishes. It tones down the harsh realities of a wilderness of galvanised iron, and is an indication of the laudable desire of the inhabitants to accomplish better things in the future. The marplot disorder of twice-built Coolgardie is galling to a visitor, who, in comparison, finds Cue as fresh and dainty as a daisy in the spring. About the dingiest exception to the general neatness of the town is the den in which the business of the Union Bank is carried on. The bank is, evidently, determined not to repeat the mistake of some other banks in Australia, which built splendidly, and ended by being unable to pay 20s. in the £.

MOUNT HEFFERMAN, CUE.

The chief store is that of the Afghan brothers, Tagh and Faiz Mahomet, whose manager, Mr. A. R. Williams, does a very large and profitable business. In the course of an interesting chat he tells us a great deal about camels and camel-drivers. Mr. Williams finds that an Afghan, as well as his camel, needs to be adroitly managed to keep him from the sulks, but when he is not brooding over a real or an imaginary grievance, he is staunch and valuable. Honest and industrious as the Oriental is, if he is allowed to work in his

own way, he is above all a total abstainer on religious grounds. "The one thing I admire the Afghan for," Mr. Williams went on to say, "is that he does not want watching to keep him from loafing. When he is left to himself he will get up as early and be upon the road, with his train, as soon as when his master's eye is upon him. The loads can be counted upon to arrive within a few hours of the allotted time, more or less, and the camels are not bustled to do it. That is because there has been no skulking, and then a rush to make up for lost time. Of course, the Indian native is slow, but he is not highly paid. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that he can be underfed. I find that an Afghan has a very sweet tooth for preserved fruit and other confections. He is as fond of them as a schoolboy, and you have to use tact in apportioning such luxuries with fairness to the firm and to the men. As the drivers do not use meat, owing to caste prejudices, they need something by way of dessert to their rice. You will see from these ration bills (producing them) that conserves of pine-apple, pears, apples, plums, &c., appear pretty frequently in the dietary scale, with an occasional cake or plum pudding by way of a treat. Of course, we employ none but Afghans on the road. We should be sorry to have to rely upon whites for our peculiar class of work, but even if we wanted them they would not be obtainable. And if they were, their pay would be so high that they would make too large a hole in our profits."

A CUE BELLE.

Tagh and Faiz Mahomet run the camel mail to Lawler's, two hundred and fifty miles beyond Cue. Lawler's is a kind of Western Australian Siberia. The most seasoned teamster talks of going to Lawler's with something like bated breath. To start on that track means that he must carry water, and take risks. There is no passenger coach to Lawler's, which is looked upon as being outside the bounds of civilisation, the last coign of an adventurous keeper of a wayside house. It is related almost as a woman's deed of heroism, that the innkeeper's wife has succeeded in reaching Lawler's, which appears to be the synonym for all that is forbidding, and almost unendurable as a place of residence. The intrepid constancy of the matron is locally admired as much as Grace Darling's perilous pull in the life-boat, from Lindisfarne lighthouse, to save the shipwrecked. No one will undertake to carry a traveller through to Lawler's. If a man wants to go there, he does so at his own risk. He has to equip himself as though he were going upon a minor exploring expedition, and takes his well-being if not his life in his hand. But when he returns from this "Darkest Africa" of the West, he tells wonderful tales of the richness of the reefs. Perhaps the golden halo of these travellers' tales is all the more gorgeous, because so far there has been no opportunity of putting them into the crucible of actual test. No mining machinery has ever gone so far; even the Telegraph Department has not laid a line to this

terra incognita, nor has the Lands Office attempted to sell business or residence blocks. No white man cares to compete for carrying the mail—Tagh and Faiz Mahomet are welcome to the contract. The letters and the parcels post are carried in packs, the same as the grog and the stores of the wayside house. The journey is made once a fortnight, the camels alternately starting from Cue and Lawler's, so that, writing from Melbourne, a correspondent would be two months getting a reply by return mail from this distant portion of the vast Australian Continent. If it were not for camels, the few people who have gone to the uttermost limits of the known West, would, during the dry season at any rate, be almost as much cut off from any intelligence of the outer world as were the mutineers of the *Bounty*, when they sought a refuge to save their necks on Pitcairn Island, and were lost to human ken for twenty-eight years.

A "RECORDER" OF "CUE."

There is no water difficulty at Cue. A Government well in the centre of the main street is free to all. The water carts carry their tanks to every door, for so low a price that the householder does not find the water rate oppressive, unless he is amphibious in the matter of baths. One bath per day is allowed to each guest at the leading hotel, but he must apply to the landlord for the key and the wrench of the tap before he can enjoy a souse, unless indeed he should get up at daylight and plunge into the dam of the Lady Mary Mine, which it is an unspeakable luxury to lave in. The dam is not one that a fastidious bather would write poetry about. It is not fed from a crystal spring; there are no pellucid depths, no mirror sparkles on its muddy surface, but to the traveller in the desert, a swim in it is the very elixir of life. After the torrid heats, the dust thickening into grime upon the skin, the louring features of the country, it is a blessed relief to have a wash. The cool, deep pool in the forest glade, the brawling mountain brook, rushing silver spangled down the hill-side, the breasting of the blue billows of the ocean, are pleasant memories, but the brightest load-star of life is to recall the rapture of a dive into the coffee-coloured dam of the Lady Mary in the dawning, after a coach ride from Mullewa to Cue.

The Murchison would appear to be, to the wage earner, what Sir Graham Berry undertook to make Victoria—"the Paradise of the working man." Miners are paid £4 per week, and the demand exceeds the supply. The doors of the hotels are plastered over with

notices calling for men to develop most of the leading mines of the district. We saw these calls during "exemption time," namely, the annual holiday, when, for a month or six weeks, the mines are permitted to be idle by force of law. When a mine goes on working during exemption it is usually a good sign for its owners, for unprofitable operations are only too glad to take advantage of a time of grace, during which outlay may cease under legal protection from "jumpers." The chief reason, next to the climate, why labour is so scarce, is the cost of reaching Day Dawn or Cue. A miner leaving Perth would only have a little change out of £25 when the coach set him down opposite the Cue Post Office. If he were so fortunate as to be able to arrive with £25 in his pocket, he would probably join a prospecting party and "try his luck." The hope of finding a good alluvial patch, or, still better, a payable reef, is alluring to a man who has the pluck and enterprise to go so far afield. As long as he has any money he pursues the search with the infatuation of a gambler, and with more than a gambler's fortitude, he endures hunger, thirst, fatigue, disappointment. Day after day he roams over trackless scrub, ever buoyed up by dreams of quartz, thick-ribbed with gold. It is only when the stores give out, when he is, to use his expressive phrase, "broke," that he goes into the mines to get some "stuff" to "have another try." On the goldfields there are many men who, by hard work and the sternest thrift, have been chasing with stress and suffering a golden *ignis fatuus* that is elusive to their grasp. Alas! it may be so until they draw their latest breath. And on the altar of this Moloch, what labour, health, and life are sacrificed!

A DRINK AT LAST.

Another significant sign that, at Cue at any-rate, the poor are not always with us, is the placard on the door of the Government buildings, inviting a handy man to clean the premises. A Government job of the most menial kind would be fiercely competed for in some of the Colonies we could name. The right to nominate a "greaser" for the railway service of Victoria was at one time, as the pages of *Hansard* record, a perquisite of office that a certain Member of Parliament earnestly desired to possess—a crumb of patronage

that would make some elector in his constituency a grateful henchman. When it was proposed that the department should be placed upon a commercial basis (a fond delusion, as the sequel proved), some of the representatives howled against the Commissioners being empowered to resist back-stair influence in the making of appointments, no matter how lowly they might be; but, in more prosperous Western Australia, the advertisement for a cleaner grows mildewed on the door of the public offices, and no suitor appears to ask for the vacant post.

MR. WALKER HODGSON.
(From a drawing by himself).

Hospitality on the Murchison is more than a fine art—it is a daily or rather an hourly observance, that it is difficult to escape from. We hear much of drought in various parts of this goldfield, and yet there are very few people who are really thirsty in Cue, while it is well-nigh impossible to remain so for long. Men who are familiar with short rations, and are acquainted with drought, eat and drink generously when the opportunity occurs, as it certainly does in the mining town where Warden Dowley holds sway. On the day following our arrival, the Warden entertained us at dinner at the Cue Hotel, and the leading municipal, mining and commercial representatives of the district were present to meet us. The details of the speeches, and the good wishes that were expressed, must be reserved for the Appendix. It is sufficient in this place to state that the entertainment was so successful that the dinner was, at a late hour, adjourned till the next evening, when we had the pleasure of reciprocating, in a small measure, the kindness we had received at Cue. Mr. Walker Hodgson was busy with his facile pencil on both evenings, as a glance at his sketches in this section plainly testifies.

MR. H. G. B. MASON, CUE.

The two following days were devoted to a further examination of the mines within a wide radius of Cue and Day Dawn, and then the time had come when we had to say good-bye to our many Murchison friends. There were many pressing invitations that we should prolong our stay, and we would gladly have done so, but the S S. *Australind* could not be permitted to leave Geraldton without us, or we should miss our passage to Cossack, the starting point of our journey through the North-West. The coach was to leave Cue soon after daybreak, but the hour was not too early for a large crowd of well-wishers to assemble to see us off. At the request of Mr. Gale, a photograph was taken of the team as a memento of our visit, and then we had begun our return to Perth. A few years ago an emperor could not get a coach on the Murchison like the one in which we rode. The old

time coach was a terror to passengers. It was rickety and cushionless, and was dragged by starveling horses at such a crawling pace that it was a fortnight or three weeks on the road. The passengers, who had paid to ride, had to walk half the way, and live on a crust. In those days of evil recollection there was not even a "changing station" on the road to give them even bread and jam, or the scraggy end of a mutton bone to gnaw at. The so-called mail-coach had to stop half the day to feed the miserable horses on the mulga scrub. There were no relays. The same four wretched brutes had to drag the lumbering vehicle the whole of the three hundred miles from Geraldton to Cue, for the Mullewa railway was not then made. The driver flogged incessantly, and, morning after morning, the collars were over ulcerous sores, and raw, galled shoulders; the team crept into Cue at a walk, quite done up, the scarred backs of their boney frames showing where the lash had played. A driver, even though he hated cruelty, had to go very near to torture to get his mail through at all.

THE TOWN CLERK, CUE (MR. H. S. CRAMER).

The growth of the Murchison lightened the troubles of the road. As the mails enlarged, the postal subsidy was increased, and a little better coaches and horses were provided, but the cattle continued to be overworked and ill-fed. A well-equipped service was beyond the resources of the mail contractors. The master mind to organise was wanting. The work passed from one feeble hand to another, and the result was always the same—desultory, ineffective, and extremely rough on men and horses. At last the occasion found the man—Mr. Gascard, the equine king of Geraldton. He conceived the idea of becoming the Cobb & Co. of the West—the great passenger carrier of the Eastern Colonies, until the firm had been superseded by a net-work of railways. Cobb's coach was a masterpiece for the work it had to do. It had the strength and elasticity of a hickory rod, and the lightness of a large gig. Hung on springs of bullock hide, it could dash into quagmires and against the boulders of rugged hills and valleys that would snap metallic springs as easily as packthread, even though they had been made of steel as finely tempered as the blade of Saladin. Cobb's coach, full-bodied, painted a staring red, as yielding as indiarubber, and as tight as a drum, was light of draught while carrying a bulging load of pasengers, mails, and baggage, that would have made the Deacon's chaise of "The Inglesby Legends" tumble to pieces on a single trip. Cobb's coach would

A CURIO OF CUE.
Piece of pearl, greatly resembling the form of the native Duzonz fish; five inches long.

find the Cue road a track of velvet contrasted with its acrobatic performance on the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, or in the "glue-pot" gulches of Gipps-land. Mr. Gascard quickly and thoroughly carried out his resolve. The coaches were built on "the other side," and teams to match them also came from there. On the day that the new service was started, barbarous travelling in the Murchison became a thing of the past for all who could afford to pay a fare.

COLONIAL CHILDREN GATHERING SHELLS. GERALDTON.

At first Mr. Gascard had an uphill fight, and the public were the chief gainers from his spirited innovation. He did not have the mail contract, and was running a costly corn-found stable, against his rivals "grass-fed" horses and a State subsidy. The competition was so unequal that very few men would have entered into it. For a long time Mr. Gascard worked for nothing, or perhaps did not pay expenses. With such odds in their favour, the mail contractors ought to have been able to laugh at his efforts to supersede them. But his tenacity and good management triumphed in the end. The old-time coach proprietors were beaten, and retired. The mail service fell into Mr. Gascard's hands, and he has held undisputed possession of the road ever since. His horses are always fit to do their stages; the mails are delivered on the due date, the passengers reach their destination without having to alight and put their shoulders to the wheel. The mail subsidy has made Mr. Gascard's vantage ground complete, and although monopoly is not generally advantageous to the public interest, it can hardly be grudged to Mr. Gascard, who has done so much for the public, and for the cause of humanity.

PORTRAIT OF A PROSPECTOR.

On our return trip we went round the east side of "The Island," and had a close surface view of the mines there. "The Island," in addition to its other inhospitable features, is destitute of fresh water, which has to be obtained about five miles away. A line of pipes is laid from a well to enable the batteries to be worked, but unless an artesian bore can be successfully put down, the mines will always be at a disadvantage in their crushing operations. The coach went to "The Island" to pick up the mail, and in re-crossing Lake Austin to regain the hard road, the near fore wheel suddenly sank to the axle, owing to the horses swerving about six inches out of the track which the traffic has made hard enough to carry an ordinary load. A curmudgeon will sometimes keep his seat in spite of any mishap of the kind, whereupon his fellow

passengers give "three cheers for the man in the coach," or make a penny subscription for "the cripple," who, at the next obstacle, is usually the most agile of the party in relieving the horses of his weight.

SURROUNDED.

Going across Lake Austin we saw the mirage in perfection. It was a lovely illusion, that would drive a thirsty man mad with disappointment. A wide expanse of shining water, fringed with trees, and dotted with islands appeared upon the landscape. The water mirrored the very foliage of the trees, and swans and ducks seemed to be gliding hither and thither, 'twixt sunshine and shadow. On the shores of the lake, in lines, by distance made more soft and enchanting, half hidden by a lavender-tinted haze, rose Venetian minarets, lofty spires of splendid temples, reaching almost to the clouds. The beauty of the panorama was heightened by the dismal surroundings of "The Island." A delicious, dreamy, sensuous feeling pervaded the contemplation of the bewitching scene. It was as though while travelling through the desert, we had suddenly been transported to the home of the Graces, to the castle of Apollo, or to the bower of Cupid. The "airy nothing" was as realistic to the eye as a garden blooming with the first flush of Spring; the perfumed air, the zephyr-borne notes of singing birds alone were wanting to cheat the imagination. There was the disillusionment! In that sweltering heat "no verdure quickens." The entrancing picture was a spectre. The reflection of the sun, quivering upon the salt crystals on the sand, was the glistening water; the castle, the umbrageous trees, the water birds, the paterres, and the inviting arbours, nothing but shadows of the shrubs upon the slopes of the gaunt "Island," seen through the etherealising glamour of the atmosphere.

MR. G. HOPE, CUE.

Any morning, at sunrise, the Murchison "Zoo" is to be seen in the bed of a creek near "The Caves." A singular

collection of birds and beasts assemble at the spot, as there is no other water in the neighbourhood. If the driver's whip is not cracked as the coach approaches, the passengers see, at a glance, a specimen of nearly every living thing that inhabits the Murchison. An "old man" kangaroo, standing five and a half feet high upon his powerful hind legs, listens attentively as his ear catches the sound of the wheels, and he peers inquisitively and half alarmed in their direction, ready to bound away. Around him are hopping slowly ten or a dozen other marsupials; a "joey," not much bigger than a hare, at the side of its mother, completes the family party. Myriads of gaudy-plumaged parroquets, parrots, and red and white tailed cockatoos, flit between the branches of the trees overhanging the little pond. An eagle-hawk, fresh, most likely, from a carrion-feast upon a perished horse or sheep, is perched on a dead limb staring stolidly at the water. On lower boughs sit a pair of sparrow-hawks, and a flock of crows. The air glistens with the wings of jays and tom-tits. Yonder stalks a large bird, taller than a heron, and as thick in the body as a swan, with long, pointed beak, grey neck and breast, rich brown back and wings. He looks like a footman in chocolate livery, and silver-laced vest. It is the so-called turkey of the Australian bush, one of the American bustard family, and a table delicacy. Here, too, is the trail of the stealthy dingo, which at the first streak of dawn warily sought his lair, and beside the wild dogs' "pad," the tiny alligator, that is known to naturalists as the iguana, has passed to the hollow in the tree in which he lives. A few swallows skim the surface of the water, and a belated crane, standing in this ghost of a marsh, seems to be dismally ruminating what will happen to him when "the soak" dries up. As the coach draws near, the birds and beasts prepare to leave. The kangaroos jump away a yard or two, and then, pausing for a moment, look fearfully in our direction, as if unwilling to leave the water at a false alarm. The sentinel crows and cockatoos fly croaking and screaming from their watch-tower on the topmost branch of the majestic swamp gum; as the horses gallop down the incline into the gully, there is a great spreading of wings, and a shril

CHUMS FROM "OUT BACK."

COMPARING STONE ON A CLAIM.

chorus of defiance. The eagle-hawk opens his broad pinions and sails away, the smaller birds of prey flapping in his rear. The cockatoos, now in wild alarm, cleave the air with hoarse, deafening cries, the multitude of little birds flick into the bushes. The turkey, which has been discreetly putting a safe distance between himself and us, with his long legs stretched to a lordly stride, casts one more backward glance, quickens his dignified retreat to a helter skelter run, and with the momentum of his rush, is like the "shard-borne beetle hoisted for his drowsy flight," whilst the kangaroos vanish into the scrub with a rapid stroke of their heavy flail-like tails, which beat time to the rhythmic thud of every giant leap of these marsupial spring-heeled jacks.

NOTE OF A MINER. EXEMPTION TIME.

On getting back to the "Chain Pump" Hotel, under the pilotage of Jack Collings, one of the best drivers on the road, we decided to travel all night if our Jehu would take us on. A substantial douceur persuaded him to do so, so that we might catch our special train at Mullewa, and the ordinary one at Geraldton for Perth. When at 11 p.m. we left the hotel, the night, as is usual on the Murchison, had grown so raw that we should have had a very cold ride in our ka-kee suits if we had not had plenty of rugs. The horses, having no sun to wilt them, were hard to hold, and the road being fairly level, we were back at the "Traveller's Rest" Hotel, of inhospitable memory, before daylight. The inmates we again found in bed, but submitted to be roused with a better grace than they had shown when we first made their acquaintance. Even the Chinese cook was in the melting mood. He did not require to be asked twice for breakfast. We had done the 242 miles between Cue and Mullewa in the unusually short time of 52 hours, including all stoppages. The train at Mullewa did not keep us waiting, and we had half an hour to spare for refreshments before booking for Perth, which we reached next morning, after having travelled nearly 600 miles—half of the journey being by coach—in 72 hours.

THE BLACK SWAN'S HOME.

Chapter 15.

The Necessity for Breaking Records—The Saucy "Australind"—The Chinaman at his Best—Shark's Bay—Concerning Sandal Wood—Galvanised Iron of Accursed Memory—The Shortcomings of an Asiatic Crew—Teaching the Natives to be Honest—Squatting Difficulties on the Gascoyne—Dirk Hartog Island and its Story.

SO far we had been able to keep to our time table, but the crux of the tour had still to come, in the shape of the expedition to the remote interior of the North-West. We were going a week's voyage to Cossack, and thence to Mallina, Pilbarra, Western Shaw, Tamborrah Creek, Nullagine, Marble Bar, Talga Talga, and Bamboo Creek. The whole of this arduous ride, which had never before been attempted by any party without a break, had to be accomplished during the worst part of the year, over the worst of roads, insufficiently supplied with water. In less than five weeks we had to be back in Albany, to sail on February 2nd for London, by the mail steamer in which we had taken our berths. The success of the undertaking might be said to hang upon a slender thread. That is to say, if the slightest mishap occurred to disarrange the carefully mapped-out plans, and the organization which it had taken months to build up, the scheme would fail. So narrowly had time to be economised, that not a single day could be set aside for emergencies which, in such an undertaking, were likely to occur. The progress of the party must be as regular as the action of a watch if the appointment with the R.M.SS. *Australia* was to be kept, and on the keeping of that appointment large issues depended. No wonder, then, that we had hastened back from the Murchison regardless of personal comfort or of expenditure, in record time.

NOTE OF A SQUATTER.

After having completed our work in Perth, we left by the night train for Geraldton. A "reserved" carriage proved to be so comfortable, that we were only awakened next morning by the shrill whistle of the engine as it steamed into the Geraldton station. The SS. *Australind*, which was to carry us to Cossack, not being in sight from Fremantle, we enjoyed the luxury of a leisurely and well-served breakfast, which the high pressure pace we had been moving at for nearly four weeks made doubly acceptable. A swim in the clear strong brine of the Indian Ocean was another treat, for Geraldton possesses a small, but well-appointed bathing establishment, and in the almost tropical summer the residents

spend a good share of their time in the water. The pier, which is being greatly lengthened by Mr. McDowall, with timber brought from his jarrah mills, at Drakesbrook, is the favourite promenade. It is pleasant to take the air there, away from the dust of the sandhills which encircle the town. The *Australind* arrived during the morning, discharged some cargo, took in a large parcel of fodder, and by four o'clock in the afternoon was sounding her whistle to inform all within hearing of the blast that she was off to the North-West. A few minutes later, the pier and the town were receding from sight, and we had commenced our voyage to a territory that is destined to have a potential influence in building up the prosperity of Australia, and which is now only in its infancy, as one of the greatest goldfields in the world.

AN OUTRIDER OF THE GOLD ESCORT.

The *Australind* is a boat that her passengers leave with regret. She is not a large boat, but if she were as roomy as she is comfortable, she would be as big as a P. and O. liner. In the hands of Captain Talboys, she is kept as spick and span as a man-o'-war. Her lines, speed, and appointments, are like those of Lord Brassey's steam yacht, the *Sunbeam*, in command of which the Governor of Victoria sailed into Hobson's Bay, and won the hearts of the people of that Colony by his skill in seamanship. The *Australind* is *par excellence* a passenger ship, interdicting evil smelling cargo and cattle. Her catering is on a lavish scale, and the *chef* a culinary artist. She is the favourite boat of those genial Bohemians, the commercial travellers who do business with the East, and whose versatile accomplishments contribute greatly to the pleasure of their fellow passengers, who fain would wish the voyage longer. But strange as it may seem for me to say so, one of the most agreeable concomitants of the *Australind*, so far as what may be called the domestic comfort, is her Chinese crew. With a full knowledge of the malignant contempt in which Mongolian is held in the Colonies, I have to set it down that if you want to have unalloyed enjoyment at sea, it is well to travel by a vessel that is full of Chinese stewards. I should be sorry to say that Europeans might not be the equal of the yellow man as servitors if they tried, but they seldom do try, as anyone but a millionaire can testify. The Mongolian is a born menial; the white steward is not, and works "against the grain." The Oriental makes a fine art of waiting at table. Alert and unobtrusive, gliding with a quick noiseless step, he seems to intuitively comprehend an order that is given to him in a foreign tongue, in a tone scarcely louder than a whisper. He does everything at precisely the right moment, and with the dexterity of a neat-handed Phyllis. Perhaps he does so well, because he has so little to do. The Chinese work for so few dollars per month above their rations, that the *Australind* carries twice or three times the usual number of stewards. There were so many of the young, sleek, well-washed, demure, and eminently

WESTRALIAN POLICEMAN.

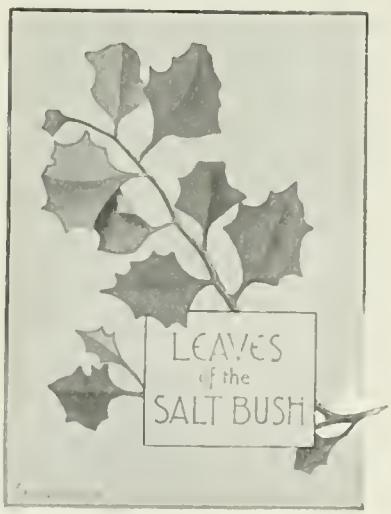
respectful servants, that one passenger, a regular passenger, was allotted a "boy"—as every Chinaman, no matter how old he may be, is called all over Australia—to himself. So much the better for the passengers, who have nothing to do with the rancorous propagandas of Labour Unions, who draw the "colour line" with savage and implacable severity. The Unions have perceived that the aliens would push them from their places, if the labour vote had not been strong enough to cause the Parliaments of the Australian Colonies to make it almost as difficult for Chinese to land on the Continent, as for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. "We're ruined by Chinese cheap labour," is the bitter cry of the European wage-earner; of the cabinet-maker for example, when, after having spent years in learning his craft, he finds that owing to the sweating competition of the Mongolian, he cannot earn

A WEST AUSTRALIAN VINEYARD.

enough by his industry and skill to maintain his wife and family. The white artisan confronted with such unfair competition has our sympathy, but the Chinese steward does not take the bread out of the mouths of women and children, for, as a rule, English stewards are young unmarried men, whom it is a pity to see in such a business. Many of them, one would think, have ability for a better start in life than the handing round of plates and the pulling of corks, and if the intrusion of the Chinese drives them into a manlier occupation, so much the better for them, probably in nine cases out of ten. The slavish office is only fit for a yellow skin, and we thank our stars that there are so many of him aboard the *Australind*. He is clean, at least to outward seeming; he is always on hand when he is wanted, and is never untidy, redolent of tobacco, or garrulous. The full flowing lines of his Eastern garments, pleasingly disguises his leanness and angularity,

and he cannot understand you if you tell any secrets in his hearing while talking to a confidential friend. No matter how early you may get up to see the sun rise, or to take an airing, the bath will be found ready, and the deck as clean as a new pin. John has the patience of Job, the industry of the ant, and, in the presence of passengers at any rate, the silent tongue that is said to make a wise head. The Captain says it is comforting to him that, no matter what he is asked to do, the "heathen Chinee" can neither growl nor swear in English. We must be excused if we confess to liking the Asiatic as a servant, who never goes on strike, nor measures his attentions to a passenger by the length of his patron's purse. He will, of course, accept a "tip," but he never expects one.

Sharks' Bay is the first port touched at after leaving Geraldton. The hamlet lies out of sight of the anchorage of the steamer. A low sand-hill is all that we see of the site of the settlement, the water being too shallow to allow vessels to approach nearer to the land. It was dark when the *Australind* sounded her fog-horn to let Sharks' Bay know of her arrival. At daylight she was surrounded by bluff-bowed sailing craft, full of sandal wood, for transhipment to Singapore, whither the steamer was going. Sandal wood is cut in curly faggots that would make handy fuel. It hardly looks worth the trouble of gathering, *apropos* of which a true story is told. A new chum swagsman lighted his fire at Sharks' Bay, and was enjoying his tea, when a horseman riding up, cursed and threatened him angrily. "Well, I never thought that there would be a row about a stick of firewood," said the wayfarer. "Stick of firewood! Don't you know sandal wood, when you see it? That firewood, as you call it, cost me £16 per ton." The timber is gnarled and yellow, inclining to an orange red. The fragrant essential oil it contains, gives it a very pungent odour, which is less noticeable as the timber dies. The great demand for this timber in the East, where it is used for incense and medicine, has greatly diminished the supply in West Australia. The Government found it necessary to adopt measures for the protection of the sandal wood forests of the Colony, which are mostly situated in sandy soils. The North-Western districts are a favourite habitat of the timber, but at one time it was also plentiful at Albany. The sandal wood is hewn near Onslow, by Chinese and Malays, and it is bought by speculators for shipment. Some years ago, when prices were very high, the consignors made very large profits, and they were tempted to over supply the market, with the result that quotations fell. Just now prices are rising again. Every stick of a cargo containing, perhaps, twenty different parcels, is branded to signify the ownership. A dab of green, red, or blue paint, a circle, stroke, cross, or square, is the sign manual of the axeman when the tree is felled. With these distinguishing marks to guide the stevedores at Singapore, the several shipments, which have been mixed together in the hold, can be sorted out as accurately as if each one had been carried in a different ship.



The *Australind* puts out a quantity of jarrah at Sharks' Bay, and the other North-

Western ports she touches at. There is some building going on even in these desolate outposts of civilization, where Nature has been so niggard of her gifts that the stunted trees are only good for fuel. The buildings for which the timber is being imported, are all of the skeleton kind, with which our run through Coolgardie and the Murchison districts have made us disagreeably familiar, namely, the very worst kind of buildings that could be desired in a tropical climate. The Anglo-Indian who thinks life is quite hard enough in the hot months under the shade of a bungalow, would squirm in the sweltering North-West. He would terribly miss his host of black attendants, his siestas until the sun had passed its zenith, and would blister under the mocking shelter of galvanised iron. The Public Works Department is one of the greatest architectural sinners; it is much given to calling an oven a post and telegraph office, much to the disgust of Mr. R. F. Sholl, the representative in the Legislative Assembly of this district of the Gascoyne. From his place in the House he does not hesitate to tell the Colonial Architect that there is a sad lack of creative power in the Public Works Department, and still less study of climatic influences. The Architect turns out his plans like a uniform batch of bread from a baker's

HEADS FROM THE NOR'-WEST.

shop, no matter whether he is building at Bunbury in the cool south, or in the torrid latitude of Broome. Why, asked Mr. Sholl indignantly last session, could not the Department exercise some little ingenuity, or at least sufficient intelligence to copy the methods employed in other places near the equator, in order to make life endurable for those civil servants whose hard fate condemned them to live so far north. The Government had not far to seek for a good pattern to imitate, for the Cable Company's offices at Broome had been thoroughly adapted to local requirements. The only answer the hon. member got, was that it would give rise to public discontent if the sultry north should be better treated in the matter of public buildings than other portions of the Colony, which shows how easy it is to govern a country according to the rule of thumb.

In the handling of cargo the Chinaman, however much we may admire him as a steward in the saloon, cuts a pitiful figure on deck or below hatches. The skinny Asiatics are not as strong as European striplings. To call them "able seamen" is to laugh at them. It used to be the boast of the Jingo that a British man-o'-war's man is the equal of three Frenchmen. That was a vaunt of national pride, but certainly an English

sailor could crumple up three of the lithe, active, puny Malays or Lascars, of the crew of the *Australind*. Two or three of them come forward to a lump of jarrah, eye it apprehensively, chatter like cockatoos with excited gesticulations, as to the best way to lift it. They coyly touch one end of the timber, as though it had teeth, and they were afraid of a bite; then they let it go and hold another colloquy, which ends in the "serang" or coloured boatswain whistling for reinforcements. By the time the piece of sawn stuff is got over the side of the steamer into the sailing boat, there are half a dozen savages at it, tugging, gasping, pushing excitedly. A diet of rice evidently does not make muscle. The sturdy tar of the British Navy, whom Mr. Clark Russell has so inimitably described, may growl about his victuals. He may be a thorn in the side of the captain, when, with a scrap of ancient salt junk and a mouldy biscuit in his hand, he goes on to the quarter deck and demands the pound of wholesome flesh which the law allows him; but when it comes to a lift, the broad-chested, big-hearted, brawny fellow, takes the grip of a bull dog, not the furtive nip of a wretched cur. Rice seems to distil blood of its own pale colour, while the meat-eating British sailor's veins are nourished with the crimson sap of a dauntless heart.

THE SKIPPER OF THE "AUSTRALIND."

The *Australind* having discharged stores and jarrah, and taken in sandal wood, topped up her cargo with some wool from the stations on the Gascoyne. One of the squatters of the neighbourhood joined us *en route* for a trip to England. He was an Englishman, who emigrated from home with his brother five years before, and took up land for stock raising. From the comforts of a settled life they had to go as pioneers upon a new tract of country, and endure many hardships. They had to overcome trouble with the blacks, sink wells, carry stores, wool, and timber, over a trackless territory three hundred miles into the interior. The first year the natives looked upon the sheep as a very desirable addition to the game of the country, especially as the merinoes did not entail the trouble of hunting and spearing like a kangaroo, or wild turkey. It was hard to convince the hereditary lord of the soil that he was not monarch of all he surveyed, and the lesson was only inculcated with a cat'o-nine-tails, wielded by an officer of the law. But the long arm of justice only reached the offenders after they had been caught red-handed, conducted some hundreds of miles to the nearest court of sessions, and the charge proved to the satisfaction of a jury. The

native is more impressively taught with a whip to respect his white neighbour's property, than by penal servitude. The tedium of being in gaol is almost compensated for in the estimation of an aboriginal by the liberal diet of three meals a day, without the trouble of having to find them for himself. The blacks who return to their haunts from "doing time" in the prison on Rottnest Island, reappear in their camps as fat as bacon pigs, and are quite ready to run the risk of going back to confinement whenever game is scarce, or they are too lazy to pursue it. The flaggellator and the triangles, on the other hand, are correctors which teach the dusky culprit that the way of transgressors is hard; the translation of the precept he best understands, is that which leaves him with a sore back. The penal code of Western Australia permits of the infliction upon aboriginals of not more than twenty-five lashes for offences which are not punishable with whipping in the case of a European. It should be remembered by those who would be prone to condemn this differential code, on the ground that the law should be no respecter of persons, that a native does not suffer nearly so much from flogging as the European. The native from his birth has been exposed naked to the weather, so that by the time he reaches manhood, he has grown a skin almost as thick as the hide of a porpoise. An eperdimis that can resist the hottest sun—nay, that remains cool to the touch in a blazing sun that would cook a steak—is not very sensitive to the "cat." Yet anything less impervious to feeling than the shell of a turtle, writhes under the infliction, as anyone will readily believe who has seen the hangman's whip with its knots as hard as balls of lead. To have heard it hissing through the air, to have marked the cruel stroke, the cry of agony from the livid lips of the bound-helpless culprit, to have seen the purple blood start from the lacerated back, to have watched his mortal terror as the terrible weapon is raised again, is an experience that haunts a lifetime.

HONG JON TOON, THE SKIPPER'S BOY.

On the Gascoyne, we learn, the pastoralists have seen a great deal of the seamy side of wool growing. They did fairly well while wool was high in price, and the finer sorts were mostly prized, but when the coarse staples of the cross-bred, the Lincoln, or the Leicester, gained the ascendency, the change in the fashion was seriously felt. To make matters worse, dry seasons followed, and killed large numbers of sheep. At the time of which we write, some relief was being sought from the Crown in the shape of a reduction of rent. The run-holders had come to the conclusion that they could not profitably pay what the Lands Department demanded, and they were asking for a re-valuation of their leases based upon the rents charged in South Australia and Queensland, where similar country to that in the northern parts of Western Australia could be taken up at an annual

rental of five shillings per thousand acres. In this Colony, where water was scarce, transport very costly, and the land, if drought was to be provided against, incapable of carrying much stock, ten shillings per thousand acres had to be paid in the Gascoyne division. A deputation, our squatter told us, was at that time on its way to Perth, to ask the Hon. Minister of Lands to reduce the rents by one half, in order that the wool growers might be placed on more equal terms with their competitors in the other Colonies, where the grazing was on the whole superior to that on the Gascoyne.

The deputation, as the newspapers reported in due course, laid their case before the Minister (Hon. A. R. Richardson), who gave them a patient hearing. Being himself largely interested in pastoralist pursuits on the De Grey, which is not far from the Gascoyne, Mr. Richardson was far more competent to weigh the issue justly between the State and the run-holders, than Ministers of the Crown in Australia usually are to handle matters outside the range of ordinary routine. It may, perhaps, be appropriate to call him a special jury, and he was not likely to flounder as some Commissioners of Customs in Victoria have done, when, without having any trade knowledge, they have been called upon to decide intricate technical questions affecting particular industries arising out of the heaviest protective tariff that has ever been known south of the equator. While taking time for the further consideration of the proposed reduction of rents, Mr. Richardson pointed out some of the objections which are likely to be raised against the concessions. In the first place, the rents were no higher now than they were when the Colony had not been so favourably circumstanced for its profitable occupation, as was the case at the present time. A largely increased population had created a keen demand for stock to supply the butchers. All the meat that could be raised in Western Australia was insufficient to feed the people; sheep and cattle were being imported from the other Colonies, and surely, the prices which importers could obtain after paying all the expenses and the duty, must be lucrative to the owners of flocks and herds within the Colony. In other words, the home market which shippers found it profitable to enter with all the extra risk and expense attendant upon the bringing of sheep and cattle two thousand miles by sea, ought

PRISONER (NATIVE) FROM ROTTNEST ISLAND.
On the SS. "Australind," off Carnarvon.

to be a splendid one for those who could put the duty, the freights, and the cost of artificially feeding the stock, while they were undergoing their long voyage, into their own pockets. Then again, the rents which were complained of, were really little more than nominal. If they were made any lower the Crown might almost as well forego any rent at all. Certainly, if the runs were not worth ten shillings per one thousand acres, it was difficult to see how the comparatively trifling sum involved in the reduction of the rents to half that sum would make the difference between the profitable and the unprofitable occupation of the land. It would be necessary to consult Parliament as to whether it would be in the interests of the Colony for the Lands Department to surrender a large portion of its revenue from extensive districts, which, in survey work, the preparation of plans, the maintenance of postal and telegraph facilities, the administration of justice, and other expenses of Government, absorbed a large share of the funds of the Treasury. Moreover, the loss of revenue could not be confined within narrow bounds. If stations were to be leased on easier terms, conditional purchasers could not be refused a similar relaxation of their contract with the Government. In conclusion, the Minister told the deputation that he would place their request before the Cabinet, and announce at a later stage the decision that had been arrived at.

LAIN SEE HING, CHIEF STEWARD SS. "AUSTRALIND."

Talking over the outlook of the station-owners of the North-West, our Gascoyne friend admitted that there had been too much earth-hunger among the people of his district. Squatters had taken up more land than they could manage. Their shepherds were too few, and the wild dogs too many for them to be able to make the best use of the large tracts included in their leases. They must reduce the size of their holdings, if they were to provide them with an adequate water supply. Some of the wool growers had already rectified their mistake, and curtailed their boundaries. That was to say, they had ceased to pay rent for some of the ground, but as no one else had taken it up, and it was unfenced, they had just as much use of it now as ever they had had. Until the squatters got a better tenure of their leaseholds than was now granted to them, they did not care to spend money upon the improvement of their properties. Fencing was almost unknown. Natives were employed as shepherds, but they were such a shiftless lot of rapscallions that it spoiled a pleasure trip to think of them. "I'm going for a change of scene to get away from the blacks, and from all thought of them," said our fellow-traveller; "I've suffered so much

TCE SUE, THE PURSER'S BOY.

from the rascals that I never want to see one or hear of one of them again. Let's go and have a game of cards."

Sharks' Bay used to be an important rendezvous of the pearlers of the North-West, but latterly there has been a falling off in the value of the shell obtained in the locality. The inlet is bi-sected by the Peron Peninsular. On the map the configuration of the neighbourhood is something like that of the three large fingers of the human hand outstretched. The spaces between the fingers represent Bamelin Pool, which is bounded on the west by the mainland, and by Freycinet Estuary. The estuary lies between a tongue of land known as Lepuch Loop and the southern end of Peron Peninsular. To the north of Lepuch Loop is Dirk Hartog Island, to which an interesting history attaches. Sharks' Bay was first explored in 1616 by Dirk Hartog, the master of a Dutch vessel called the *Endragt* or *Endracht* (Concord). The vessel was of 360 tons, and was sailing from Holland to the Indies. Hartog left a memento of his visit on the north end of the island to which he gave his name. A tin plate nailed to a post (says the Year Book of Western Australia) bore the following inscription :—

"Anno 1616, the 25th October. Arrived here the ship *Endragt*, of Amsterdam ; the

BUSH FIRE ON THE COAST.

first merchant, Gillis Miebais, of Laik ; Dirk Hartog, of Amsterdam, Captain. They sailed from hence for Bantam, 27th ditto."

Below the plate, and cut indistinctly with a knife on the post were the words :—

"The under merchant, Jan Stins, chief master ; mate, Pieter Dookus, of Bill, A° 1616."

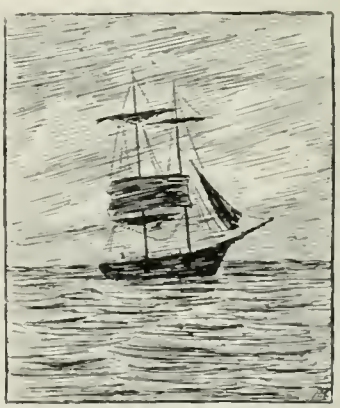
On February 3rd, 1697, William de Vlaming, a fellow-countryman of Hartog, saw the plate, and it remained where it was set up until early in the 18th century, when Captain de Freycinet carried it to the Museum of the Institute of Paris. The whole of this part of the North-West coast received a great deal of attention from the mariners of Holland. The *Mauritius*, a Dutch vessel, touched near the North-West Cape in July, 1618, and on the following year, Jean Van Edel accidentally sighted the Abrolhos, while he was in charge of an outward bound fleet. He examined the Abrolhos, and gave his name to the territory lying between Sharks' Bay and Champion Bay. Cape Leeuwin (Lioness) was so called after a Dutch vessel, which in 1622 sailed round that promontory. She proceeded along the coast, sounding it as far as the present site of Albany. The next investigator of which there is any note, was the *Gul de Zeepart* (Golden Sea Horse). The date of her visit to the Great Australian Bight of to-day, was January, 1627. She had on board Peter Nuyts, who was afterwards ambassador to the Court of Japan. He sighted Cape Leeuwin, surveyed the

southern coast line, called the district Nuyts' Land, a name that has fallen into disuse, in spite of the service the Dutch representative rendered to the exploration of the Western Australian shore-lines.

Sir Malcolm Fraser, from whose interesting work we have already quoted, goes on to say:—"In 1628, on the 8th October, a colonising expedition of eleven vessels, in charge of Commodore Francis Pelsart, left Holland, bound for the East Indies. Ten of these ships appear to have foundered in a terrible storm encountered off the south-west coast of New Holland, as they were never afterwards heard of: and the *Batavia*, Pelsart's ship, driven out of her course during the same storm, and having lost her reckoning, struck on the night of the 4th June, 1629, on one of the islands of Houtmans' Abrolhos, and became a total wreck. The greater part of the crew and passengers, however, safely reached the shore. After vainly searching for water on the adjacent islands and the mainland opposite, Pelsart, with seven others, eventually made his way in one of the vessel's boats to Batavia; here he obtained the use of a frigate called the *Sardam*, in which he returned to rescue the remainder of the castaways. On his arrival he found that during his absence, a portion of the crew, under the supercargo, Jerome Cornelis, had mutinied, and massacred the greater number of the passengers, intending to seize any vessel and turn pirates. Pelsart being forewarned of this intention by some of those who had escaped from the mutineers, easily captured the ringleaders. Some of them were executed, two others were marooned on the mainland, near Champion Bay. The *Sardam*, having taken silver treasure from the wrecked vessel, sailed with the survivors for Batavia. In 1628, Captain De Witt, of the *Vianen*, a vessel named after a small town in Holland, discovered and gave his name to what are now known as the North-West and Kimberley districts, and afterwards lost his vessel in the neighbourhood of Dampier's Archipelago.

"COCK-EYED BOBS," NEAR SHARKS' BAY.

William Dampier was the first Englishman to land on the coast of Western Australia. He was supercargo of the *Cygnet*, a small vessel trading to South America. The crew seized her, and steered for New Holland in search of a retreat where they could repair the vessel and turn her into a buccaneer. An anchorage was found in what is now known as Cygnet Bay, an inlet in the north-western corner of King Sound in the West Kimberley district. Dampier explored the surrounding country, and left the *Cygnet* at the Nicobar Islands, made his way to England, and published an account of his adventures and discoveries. He was sent by William III. in the *Roebuck*, under an Admiralty Commission,



DISTRESSED OFF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

to make further explorations on the North-West coast, and to ascertain whether New Holland was a continent or an island. Dampier found the country very little to his liking. He had so much difficulty in getting water that he abandoned the object of his mission and proceeded to New Guinea. In his report he said that New Holland was too sterile to be worth colonising, and that it was inhabited by "the miserablest people in the world." A long interval elapsed before this reproach was removed by the landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, in 1770. Nearly 60 years later (1827) Captain Gilbert, of R.M.S. *Success*, sailed from Sydney to inspect West Australia, which he found to be adapted for settlement. On the 6th June, 1827, the transport brought to the newly-founded Colony Lieutenant-Governor Stirling, his family, and a party of sixty-nine settlers, to add another civilised possession to the Empire of Great Britain.

THE NEW ELDORADO. ORIENTALS EN ROUTE TO THE FIELDS.

Chapter 16.

Sultry Carnarvon—"'Tis Distance Lends Enchantment to the View"—Aboriginal Isaac Waltons—A Sail on the Pier—A Damp Departure—The "Australind" to the Rescue—Onslow—Farewell to the "Australind."

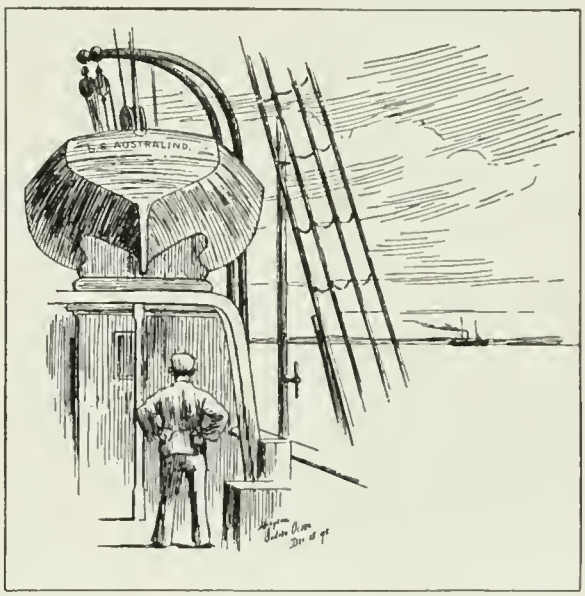
THE WEATHER is getting very sultry as we approach Carnarvon, at the mouth of the Gascoyne River. A warm breath steals over the water even after sunset, and sleeping on deck under the starry canopy is much to be preferred to the seclusion that the cabin grants. Every day an ice drink and a lounge under the thick awnings of the *Australind* becomes a greater luxury; there being no ladies on board, pyjamas are the favourite wear. The days glide by in a dream of delightful insouciance; it is a delectable life on the ocean wave when the moonlight floods the deck with her soft rays, and far over the smooth waters of the Indian Ocean the ripples scintillate like molten silver, and the balmy zephyrs are just warm enough to lull a Sybarite seductively to sleep. Nothing could be more delightful, or a worse preparation for the rough time we have before us in the dash we are to make through the desert. Those who know the North-West in January grimly regard the voluptuaries of our party as we lie idly basking in the sun. But sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. It will be time enough to stiffen the sinews and summon up the blood when we reach Roebourne, about which so many dark hints of evil omen are muttered. The skull at the Egyptian feast was not more out of place than the plaguey portents of what will be our plight on the long hot journey to Talga Talga and Bamboo Creek, during the halcyon days we are rocked in the cradle of the deep, on whose broad bosom the Angel of Death brooding o'er the ship casts no dark shadow.

THE BUTCHER, SS. "AUSTRALIND."

The steamer had to lie some distance off the pier at Carnarvon. The wharf is a very long one, but the water is very shallow at the end of it. A man who waded into the sea at Carnarvon to drown himself would get tired of walking before he could get enough water to cover his knees. The town is barely visible behind a mangrove swamp. The visitor who does not wish to get a "fit of the blues" ought to be content with a seaward view of Carnarvon. The mangrove charitably veils its desolateness with a foliage that is as

THE CALVERT PARTY *EN VOYAGE* TO THE NORTH-WEST

mournful as the dank hair of a drowned woman. From the deck of the steamer, Carnarvon would pass without execration; seen closely it is the dreariest sand heap in the universe; it leaves on the mind an indelible impress of deformity; a painfully acute sense of being the last abode of gloomy wretchedness that unhappy men and women ever made a place of refuge. In a freak of idle curiosity we went ashore in the lugger that plies between the shipping in the offing and the pier, carrying freight and passengers. On being landed at the head of the jetty, which is about a mile long, the village could be descried at the distance looking dismal enough, but not the hideous thing it really is. An aboriginal patriarch and five or six gins of various ages were fishing on the pier. The old man seemed to be a kind of swarthy Brigham Young, or else he was a Benedict who had been abundantly blessed with daughters. Or he might have been giving the girls of the tribe a treat, while their husbands, cousins, or lovers were busy hunting or shepherding. All the natives wore, like Gunga Din, a "twisty rag in front, and something less than half of that behind." They were having good sport. Fish of the size of a herring were "biting well." They took a bait of mussel greedily, and were "struck" with much adroitness, especially by the women, who fished with the seriousness of people who were angling for a dinner. As each struggling trout was hauled in, it was held by the shank of the hool on the hardwood of the pier and despatched with a sharp blow on the head. The heavy stone which each gin used as a club, came down with a crack that gouged the eyes of the fish from their sockets. The blow was accompanied with a merciless gleam of the captor's eye that was very unwomanly, and very unpleasant to look at. Brunton Stephens has been accused of harshly describing the lubra in his apostrophe "To a Black Gin," but his critics would confess the fidelity of the portrait if they had seen the gins fishing on the Carnarvon pier. Their thick lips, flat noses, huge mouths, shrunken, distorted figures, and pendulous paps, were a libel upon the image of woman.



SS. "SALADIN," AGROUND OFF CARNARVON, W.A.
(As seen from the "Australind.")

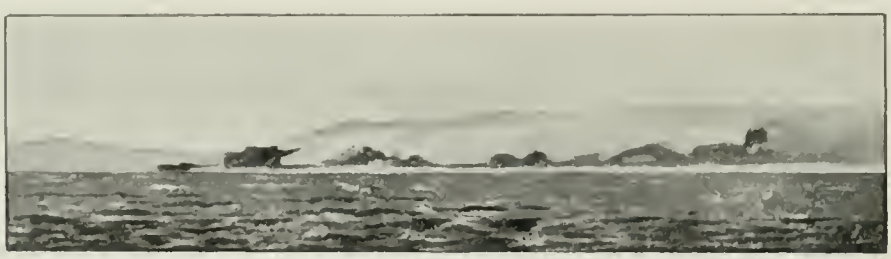
The pier is so long, the west winds so continuous, and the hot weather so relaxing, that the residents of Carnarvon have an ingenious plan for getting to their homes without any personal exertion. The decking is laid with tramway rails on which runs a trolly. The trolly is supposed to be driven by hand power, working a lever attached to a crank on the wheels, but our boatman knew a trick worth two of that. He hoisted a square sail on two poles, and gave the trolly a shove. The wind caught the sail, and away we went faster and faster as the wheels gained momentum, until at last we acquired the velocity of an ice slide.

Then a cluster of sand hummocks "blanketed" our sail, as a yachtsman would say, and we slowed down to the walking pace of a broken-kneed cab-horse. Passing the hummocks, the

DIRK HARTOG ISLAND. STEEP POINT (THE ENTRANCE TO SHARKS' BAY).
The most westerly point of Australia.

trolly shot forward with a fresh impetus, and whirled over an embankment raised above the mangrove swamp into the main street of the ugly dust patch that is dignified by the name of Carnarvon.

The township is the shipping place of the wool clip of the Gascoyne River district. The place was given telegraphic communication on the August of 1884, and was proclaimed a municipality on May 19, 1891. There are two hotels, one store, post office, school, and a few scattered houses. The glare of the universal iron of the building and the sand dunes is overpowering. "Never was there such a place to pass through an hour glass." Anthony Trollope must have seen Carnarvon through a telescope while his mail steamer was passing down the Indian Ocean, when he made this remark about Western Australia. The wind blows the dust about until it is difficult to breathe; lukewarm liquors are tendered to slake an intolerable thirst. The hours before the boat will start back to the *Australind* pass on leaden wings. Half a gale is blowing when the landing stairs are left. The seas wash over the lugger, but no one minds a wetting to get away from Carnarvon. The craft bobs like a cork in the seaway. The only dry place is under the half-deck to windward. To coil up there is snug for small people. The captain's boy turns in, and with his knees in his mouth leers complacently at the drenching of the passengers. The water pours off us in cataracts, to the great amusement of the onlookers on the *Australind*, who leave their game of poker



FALSE ENTRANCE TO SHARKS' BAY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

to laugh at us coming in out of the wet. The boat is the sport of a cross sea; she reels and plunges and is thumped on the bow till she quivers like a violin string on a top

note. The trip is unpleasant, but it thrills us with joy to shake from our feet the dust of forlorn Carnarvon.

The *Australind* soon had an opportunity of playing the part of a friend in need to her consort of the same service, the steamer *Saladin*, which had got aground near Carnarvon on the previous night. We found her flying signals of distress on a sand-bank almost as soon as we had left Carnarvon. The *Australind's* timely approach was hailed with a hoarse whistle of exultation. Tow lines were got out, and both vessels went full steam ahead, at least the engines worked their hardest, but the *Saladin* remained as fast as a rooted tree. The direct pull was a failure. The captains decided to find out what manœuvring would do. The *Australind* took a minute or two for breathing time, while the stokers piled on the coal: then she eased the strain and shifted out a bit to seaward, before putting on her power to try and bring the *Saladin* slant-wise. A great cheer announced that she had done so, but only the bow had shifted. Steam was made until the furnaces roared, and the hawsers threatened to part. The suspense was keen. If the stranded steamer did not come soon she would not come at all. Her screw was churning the water impotently like a wounded whale. Our Captain eyed the *Saladin* keenly, and he was the first to say that she was "coming." He felt it with the sensitiveness of a surgeon's finger upon a patient's pulse—felt that the strain upon the hawser "was not so dead." The tension grew easier, until even the passengers could see the vessel receding from the sand-bank, and soon she was fully afloat, ready to resume her voyage to Fremantle. As the vessels passed each other on opposite courses, farewells were exchanged, with many fraternal shouts on both sides, and the waving of caps and handkerchiefs from stem to stern.

BRINGING HOME THE WASHING, AT CARNARVON.

We pursued our voyage northward, skirting Cape Cuvier pretty closely, and also getting a near view of Cape Farquhar, Point Cloates, Vlaming Head, and the North-West Cape. The latter is a bold headland, forming the most westerly point of the Colony. The promontory half encircles Exmouth Gulf and the Bay of Rest, an almost land-locked anchorage. Passing the Cape, whose majestic outlines are splendidly revealed in the glories of the setting sun, as much as most travellers ever see of Onslow comes into sight in the shape of a low sandy shore. Onslow stands on the banks of the Ashburton River. The hamlet, which we were told is not so large as Carnarvon, and quite as dreary, relies upon the pastoralists to justify its existence. There was some wool to be taken in at Onslow, which gave rise to a dilemma, as if we did not go on without delay, we should not be able to leave Roebourne on the appointed date. We asked the Captain what he would take to go straight on, land us at Cossack,

A CARNARVON BEAUTY

and come back for his cargo. He named the sum; it was an expensive bargain, but it was made, as our time-table had to be adhered to at any cost. The *Australind* started forthwith for Cossack, and the Singapore passengers, recognising the emergency that prolonged their voyage, were good enough not to murmur at travelling in a circle.

The navigator's course from Onslow to Cossack is studded with islands, on which there is not a single beacon. There is scarcely room on the chart for the names of Direction Island, Thereward Island, Rosily Island, Shell Island, Mary Ann Island, Beagle Island, Barrow Island, and a dozen others surrounding Dampier's Archipelago. Sea-girt rocks can be seen on every hand as we enter Hampton Harbour, which is close to Cossack, one of the few lighthouse stations on the coast. The light is on Jarman Island, and throws its rays from an elevation of 96 feet. This mariners' lamp was first lit on May 16, 1888. It is a fixed white light of the third dioptric order; the tower is 51 feet high, and the light is visible for a distance of 15 miles in clear weather.

SS. "AUSTRALIND" AT SEA.

The sea view of Cossack has some attractiveness. From Depuch and Forestier Islands in the foreground, the eye roves to the head of the harbour, where the River Harding flows into the sea amidst a dense growth of mangroves. The water is dotted with small craft, and, happily, the buildings are too far away to spoil the picture; the heat thus early in the day is not oppressive; the shimmer of a light haze softens the landscape like the face of beauty behind a veil, and under these mellowing influences Cossack seems to be bathed in an atmosphere of tropical repose. But we were a mile and-a-half away, and were soon to be disenchanted. The passenger boat comes alongside, and we leave the *Australind* with regret to sail past Depuch Island, round the site of the lighthouse, and up to the stone pier that is close against the mangroves.

A VOICE IN THE DESERT.

Chapter 17.

Cossack—A Decaying Industry—The Perils of Pearling—The Ravages of the Willy-willy—The Cossack-Roebourne Tramway System—A Welcome to the North-West.

COSSACK IS built on a sandhill behind the lighthouse. The boatman points out the features of the town as they come into sight. The ground behind the beacon is covered with shanties—a patchwork collection of huts of all shapes and sizes, known as "Jap town." Some of the Eastern women are standing at their doors. Malay and Japanese men are seen in the alleys of the warren. They are pearlers when the boats are at work; now they are loafers. The Union Bank, the manager's residence, the public buildings, some large stores, two hotels, and some cottages are all that is noteworthy of Cossack. The Post Office, built of stone, and, wonderful to relate, possessing a basement in which a grateful shade is found, makes some attempt to adapt itself to the climate, but the architect, faltering in his humane intention, clapped on an iron roof instead of one of tiles. The large Customs House and goods' sheds have been another object of liberal Government expenditure. Across the road from the pier, which is built very high—for there is an enormous rise and fall of the tide—are the warehouses of the North-West Mercantile Company, the Weld Hotel and The Pearler's Rest. There is not a vestige of any green thing in Cossack except the sombre foliaged mangroves, but a few precious drops of fresh milk are yielded by a flock of goats, who eat bare the spinifex of a steep conical hill, to which they have given their name.

GEE SENG, NO. 1 FORE CABIN BOY.

Cossack was at one time a considerable place as the chief rendezvous of the pearling fleet, when their industry was fruitful of large profits, if not of fortunes. But both the yield and the value of pearl have declined of late years. The Sheriff's sale of a pearler's outfit, while we were at Cossack, was an indication of the altered times. Nevertheless there is still a great deal of capital employed in pearling, and the enterprise is one of the chief resources of the North-West. The fleet

of schooners laid up at Cossack from October till February, in order that they may avoid the tempestuous weather of that season, is large enough to land an army of invaders. The boats are cunningly secreted in the mangroves to shelter them from the hurricanes. The craft are, so to speak, docked in a bed of mud, with the tough branches of the mangroves almost covering them with a protecting embrace. The schooners are stripped when they are laid up. All the sails are removed, together with everything that is movable. Nothing but an empty hull and the lower mast are left for the terrific gales of these latitudes to wreak their vengeance upon. The sinuous course of the channel among the mangrove is so much like that of a corkscrew that some of the boats would seem to have been hoisted overland into their places instead of having been floated into them at high tide.

AH LUN, "THE DOCTOR," "AUSTRALIND."

In the early days of pearling on the North-West coast, coloured native divers were employed to bring up the treasure of the deep. As long as they could hold their breath the "boys" remained under water casting shells into baskets, and then came up for air. Occasionally they endangered their lives by staying down too long. Some of them were drowned; others were injured for life by hemorrhage of the lungs. Then the introduction of the diving dress brought whites into competition with the Malays. The new system added to the working expenses, but it proved more satisfactory to the owners of the boats than the old method. There was no longer any danger of a schooner being rendered useless for the season through the desertion of her native divers. Neither was there so much peculation, for the Malay is an expert thief, as professional receivers of stolen pearls knew to their profit. The native diver was useful to an employer who was stalwart, or had moral force to make his crew afraid to run away. The Malay did not expect high wages, and it was easy to import him under a labour agreement, provided that he was returned to his own country when his term of service had expired. If he were skilful, industrious, and loyal, he put money into his Captain's purse. But, as a rule, the Asiatic is so untrustworthy that he is gradually being displaced by the European.

A revival of prosperity came to Cossack a few years ago upon the discovery of gold at Mallina and Pilbarra. The town was thronged with diggers *en route* to the different "rushes," which well repaid the long journey. But when the alluvial was worked out, and the era of reefing had not begun, there was another lull in the briskness of trade at Cossack.

Now that the richness and permanence of the goldfields of the North-West have been proved, and large Corporations are placing machinery on their properties, Cossack has become an important port. We found the town full of miners, who were enjoying "exemption time," and cash was circulating freely. The town is a rough place to live in, for it is almost wholly without the refining influences of white women. It is true that there are a few ladies at Cossack, the wives of some of the leading commercial men and Government officials, but they are seldom tempted to take exercise over the sandhills, and except for the occasional sight of a black nurse with a perambulator, a stranger would be apt to suppose that bachelors had sole possession of the town.

IN A COSSACK HOTEL.

At Cossack we see for the first time the chaining down of houses and stores, as though they were wild beasts. The windows are all provided with wooden shutters, which gives them a very gaol-like aspect. The galvanised iron of the roofs is barred with broad beams of wood, in order to combat the forces of Nature in her furious moods. The dreaded "willy willy," or tornado of the Summer months, would lift ordinary buildings from their foundations, and tear off roofs as easily as sheets of paper, unless the chains, the shutters, and the battens were on guard. At the first sign of the glass going down during the hottest months of the year, the householders, "with busy hammers closing rivets up, give dreadful note of preparation." The shutters are closed, the doors locked, the shipping at the pier lashed to the mooring-piles with as many hawsers as there are strands in a cobweb. The terrific force of the "willy willys" has from time to time caused enormous damage. In March, 1872, one of these cyclones struck the town and shattered a large number of houses; even more damage was caused on May 7th and 8th, 1882. Three years ago a pearler was caught in one of these storms and sunk. The master of the craft perished, with his wife and several of the coloured crew.

HOLDING THE MIRROR UP TO (ABORIGINAL) NATURE.

Cossack, which has also been known by the names of Tientsin and Port Walcott, was proclaimed a municipality on the 29th November, 1871. It is eight miles from Roebourne, with which it is connected by a tramway belonging to the Government. The line has a very narrow gauge; the cars resemble the palanquins of China, except that they are drawn by a single horse instead of being carried on men's

shoulders. Two of the toy-like cars start daily from Cossack and Roebourne, and a special tram may be chartered at any time for the sum of 38s. The line, which earns a good income, traverses flat country between some low hills. The line crosses, on an embankment, what in the rainy season is flooded land. To avoid all danger of a flood that has not yet made its appearance, the route has been made one and-a-half miles longer than a straight line, but the deluge that the far-sighted engineer feared when he plotted the track may come at last.

As the friends who had come to meet us had brought conveyances, we drove to Roebourne. Among the first to greet us were Mr. Augustus Roe, who presides at the Assize Court of the district, and Mr. Harry Osborne, Mayor of Roebourne, who was to conduct us on our tour through the Pilbarra Goldfields. A welcome was also given us on the pier by an assemblage of nearly all the chief men of Cossack, who, while expressing their best wishes for the success of our arduous trip, grimly added that they would be very glad to see us safely back again. It transpired that the banquet which was to be given in our honour at Roebourne that evening gave promise of being one of the most notable festivities that had ever taken place in the district. In order to mark their good feeling, long distances had been travelled by many of those who desired to attend.

The transfer of our luggage from the ketch in which we had come ashore was accomplished by an African, who furnished an illustration of the state of the labour market at Cossack. The negro asked 15s. for ten minutes' work. He got a third of that amount, under a threat of not getting anything at all if he scorned to accept the crown. Starting for Roebourne, the carriages took us over a very excellent road formed by the Public Works Department across what had been a bog. The view was one that we were to become very familiar with before we reached Bamboo Creek, *i.e.*, hills of various shapes, intersected by table-land, for great variety of scenery is not one of the characteristics of the North-West.

FLAMING HEAD, NORTH-WEST CAPE.

Chapter 18.

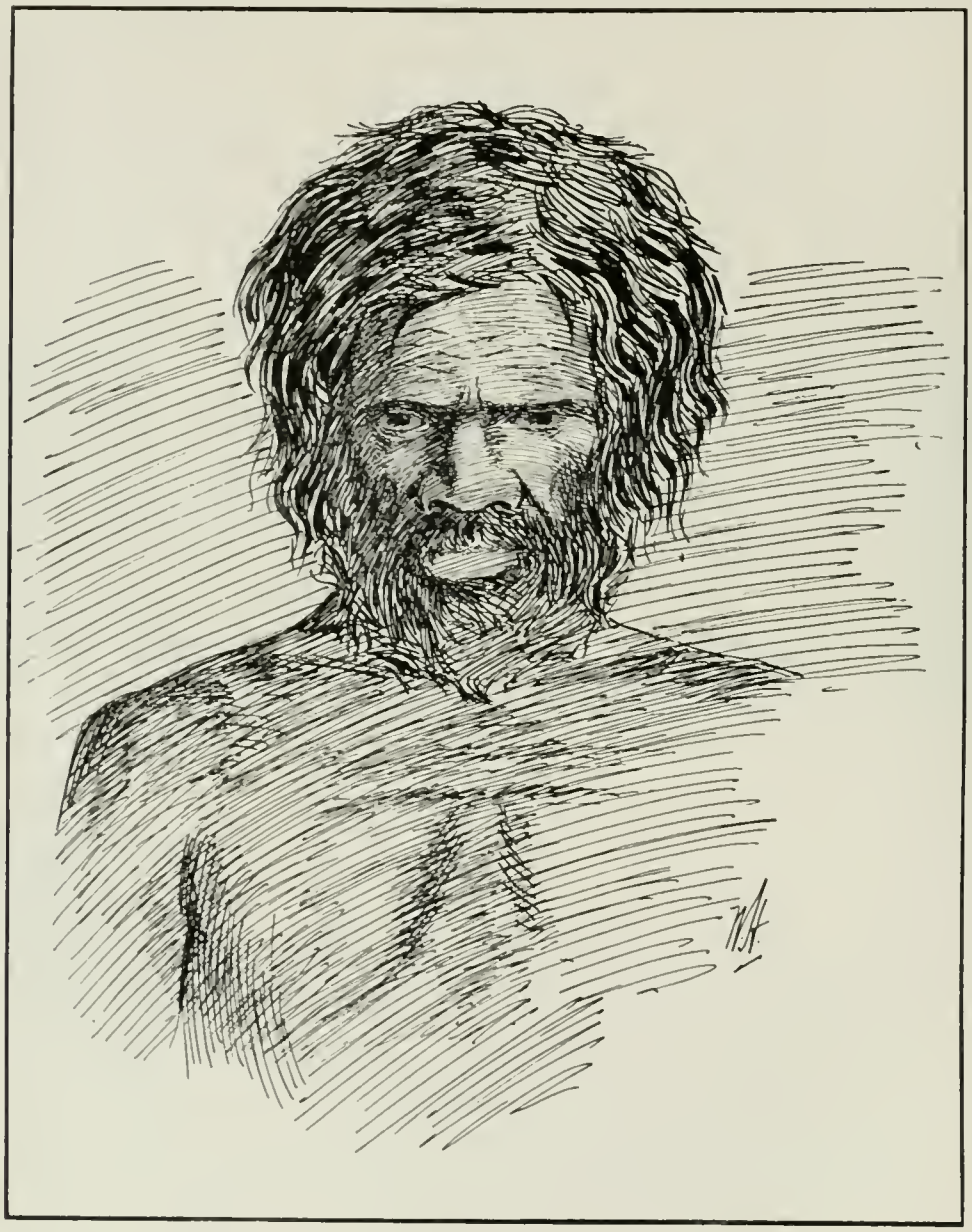
Roebourne—The Public Buildings and the Hospital—Oriental Luxury—
A Record North-West Banquet.

ROEBOURNE, which occupies a hill, should not be judged by first impressions. Entering the town, the sight is a shabby one. The old buildings are mean and dilapidated: the new ones are some distance farther on. The prosperity of the North-West goldfields is strongly reflected in the architectural contrasts. Until gold was discovered in the district, Roebourne was evidently a very primitive place, where the bush carpenter was builder-in-chief; the opening up of the mines established the stone age. The old quarter, which never had any good looks to boast of, has become an eyesore beside the substantial new hotels and public offices, which redeem the reputation of the capital of the North-West. The Episcopal Church has a commanding site on the crest of the hill. The Mechanics' Institute deserves a better home as an agency of light and leading, than the squalid, squat, and slatternly den in which the newspaper literature of the day is open to the perusal of the public. The Institute is put to utter shame by the superb altars of Bacchus, represented by the Jubilee and the Victoria. What a treat these spacious, high-class hotels would be in Perth, where travellers are clamouring vainly for a decent bed and board. Of massive masonry, with dining and billiard rooms large enough for a public hall, encircled by broad verandahs, and conducted in a style that would please the most fastidious taste, overlooking the Harding River, and guileless of the art of adulterating good liquor, these hotels are the pride of the district.

MR. H. OSBORNE
MAYOR OF ROEBOURNE, 1895.

So far we have not seen the Government buildings, which do so much to redeem the barbarousness of early Roebourne. The design of the Post and Telegraph Office, which, saving that it has the inevitable iron roof, pays more respect to the fiery sun that beats upon it. The

masonry is thick, and the apartments large. The private quarters of the staff are all that could be desired, and the decorative features of the front elevation are chaste, if not remarkable for beauty. The hospital hard by has been a good friend to scores, if not hundreds of men, who, in the day of their affliction, had no other place of refuge. The



A SON OF THE SOIL.

isolation of Roebourne, and the still greater isolation of the Pilbarra Goldfields, should be taken into account in estimating the value of the work done by the Infirmary. The men who go to the fields are in every case without a home. They are scattered over a territory

of enormous extent, in which there is scarcely the vestige of a town, and not the semblance of any provision for the sick. The conditions of life in the mining camps are hard enough for the able-bodied; for the sick they are intolerable—the hospital at Roebourne is their only hope. Its doors alone are opened to the invalid smitten with the dreaded scourge of typhoid fever, and from the great desert beyond the Harding River he makes his weary way, perhaps for hundreds of miles from the interior, to this ark of mercy. The hospital is built on a liberal plan, and the management is in the zealous and skilful hands of Dr. Hicks. No institution in the Colony is doing more valuable work than the Roebourne Hospital.

At Mr. Roe's house, known as the Residency, we received a hearty welcome. Mr. Roe is a man of artistic tastes. In a more genial environment he would have lived amid beautiful surroundings. In the fierce heat of Roebourne he has done everything that is possible to approach his ideal. Our host is the kind of man who, when he has the opportunity, plants orchards and conservatories, beautified with ornamental water, and makes the air musical with the melody of playing fountains and the notes of singing birds.

"JAP TOWN," ROEBOURNE. DECEMBER, 1895.

His well-ordered establishment is replete with every tropical luxury. His commodious stone villa has broad porticoes, screened verandahs, an extensive and well-chosen library, punkahs, unlimited baths, and almost as many coloured servants as there are in the retinue of an Indian nabob. As the leading judiciary, solicitor, and mining promoter of the North-West, Mr. Roe is protean in his attainments.

After lunch, we dressed in the white costume that is *en regale* at Roebourne, and after a chat found that the hour for the banquet was approaching. The Jubilee Hotel was the scene of the festivity. The large main hall was pleasingly decorated and glowing with illumination, a charming setting for the radiance of the spotless vesture of the brilliant gathering. Here was "rational dress" indeed. A swallow-tail at a dinner party at Roebourne would be as unpicturesquely out of place as a clown at a funeral oration. The crystal, the flowers, the sparkle of the electro-plate, the flags on the walls, the variegated shades about the lamps imparted just the tones of relief to the snowflake sheen of the white

uniforms that made the *tout ensemble* one that lingers lovingly in the memory. If the most typically conventional Englishman, the greatest slave of fashion—which compels its votaries to garb themselves in a suit of woe to take part in the social amenities of life—had caught a glimpse of that banqueting chamber, its grace and artistic harmonies, he would be ashamed in future of the sombre livery of a hireling waiter. The dinner, which was fully described in the *Northern Public Opinion*, and appears as an Appendix of this book, was one of our most pleasant experiences in the North-West, and it was at a late hour that the festivities were reluctantly brought to a close.

A LONG, LONG PULL.

THE NORTH-WEST BANQUET TO THE AUTHOR.

MR. A. S. ROE PROPOSES "THE GUEST OF THE EVENING."

Chapter 19.

The Plan of Campaign—Preliminary Preparations—The Mayor of Roebourne in Command—Mr. Osborne's Career—The Start—Illness and Death of Leonard Calvert—The Frail Sisters of the East—Early Impressions.

THE NEXT morning "the plan of campaign" was detailed to us by Mr Osborne, who for six weeks had been busy perfecting the arrangements for our long ride. An old bushman, who had often been over the road we were going, but not in one continuous journey, nor in the sultriest time of the year, Mr. Osborne was just the man for the occasion. He knew what had to be done every day if we were to get through in the appointed time, and exactly how to do it. A better organiser it would be impossible to find, for he has the quick eye of a martinet, and the method of an adjutant-general, in devising camp equipment. He takes as naturally to the selection and command of his servants, as a duck to water. In every respect he is a thorough "workman;" and above all, exact in calculating the resources required, in order to safely, smoothly and expeditiously accomplish a certain enterprise. He had mapped out the time-table with the accuracy of a sum in decimal fractions, and he knew to a mile what each of his large troop of horses could do. Nothing is ever left to chance by Mr. Osborne. He knew that ours was far from being a light task, but he was resolved that it should be performed to the hour.

ANT HILLS IN THE NOR'-WEST.

Mr. Osborne had been given what is known in the vernacular as "a large order." To get over upwards of seven hundred miles of tropical and desert country in less than three weeks—for out of that period time had to be set apart for the inspection of a large number of important mines—depending entirely on our own resources for both transport and commissariat, such special plans were necessary that some of them are worth recording, particularly when it is borne in mind that it was not possible to make requisitions on the emporiums or the livery stables of a large city. To carry so large a party, a second conveyance in addition to Mr. Osborne's Abbott buggy had to be built. Then there were all the

relays of horses to provide, for there are no coaching stations on the road where reinforcements could be obtained. In the oppressive heat it would be dangerous to expect horses to travel very far at their best speed, and therefore no fewer than thirty-five of them had been purchased by Mr. Osborne, in order that we might run no risk of a break down *en route*. The animals were mostly unbroken to harness, so that they had to be put through a careful course of preliminary work before our arrival at Roebourne. Having got his teams all matched, docile, and seasoned, our chief charioteer had sent many of them on hundreds of miles "up the road" to various sheep stations to await our coming. The balance were to be driven by a stockman in the rear of the coaches, so that a change might be made whenever a horse was lagging in his paces. The feeding of such a large draft of roadsters was at first a perplexing problem in so remote and arid a country, where no produce is grown or can be purchased, but, as usual, Mr. Osborne found a way to surmount this and every other obstacle. It came to his knowledge that a Melbourne merchant was prepared to send forward a consignment of compressed fodder, composed of the best materials, packed in the smallest compass, suitable for Army service, for the expedition in which we were engaged. This fodder proved fully equal to its reputation. It was compounded of the right proportions of chopped hay, oats, bran, and wheat, to make a perfect ration for a horse under a heavy strain of work. The bales weigh one hundredweight each, and are of the convenient size of a chest of tea. A waggoner, some weeks before the *Australind* reached Cossack, started up the track to Marble Bar with a large quantity of the feed, dropping portions of his load at the points agreed upon, until we were able to drive in his wake unencumbered with corn, yet fully assured that our cattle would be as well fed in the interior of the North as if they were at work in Perth. Along with the fodder the teamster had coached, as an Indian trapper would say, some "medical comforts" of favourite brands, which were "wanted on the voyage."

Mr. Osborne is one of the best type of Westralian natives, about forty years of age. From the day that he arrived at Cossack, his force of character and intelligence placed him on the up-grade. When the alluvial rushes began, Mr. Osborne was a wheelwright and blacksmith, but he found a far more congenial sphere for his energetic temperament in becoming the pioneer store-keeper on several of the goldfields. Wherever miners congregated on a good patch, they could depend upon Osborne's teams following them, no matter how many mountains or rivers in flood he had to cross. At the Western Shaw and the Marble Bar, Osborne and his partner were the first to sell a bag of flour or a bottle of

grog. When the Western Shaw lost a lot of the men, who were allured to the newer glories of Marble Bar, there was no road between the two places. A range of hills, believed to be impassable, had to be crossed. A waggon loaded with stores is hardly the kind of conveyance with which to make a flying survey, but the need was imperative. The man to make the attempt was Osborne's partner, under the guidance of a horseman, who for some time had been trying to earn the reward of £50 offered by the Government for the discovery of a practicable road. A pack-horse route this explorer certainly had lighted upon, but to try and steer a waggon across the mountains was looked upon even by old bushmen as being a foolhardy enterprise. But neither Osborne nor his partner know such a word as fail. The waggon started in the face of every obstacle. It crept up the mountains and down the ravines, double breaked at the steepest places, and the horses sliding on their haunches. At many places boulders had to be removed, trees cut down. The journey was so toilsome that the store of water that was carried gave out when the team were only half through to Marble Bar. The nearest known "soak" was two days' stages away. The horses had been too much knocked about to be able to make a special effort to reach the water. The party were in the gravest danger, when the black boy, who had been reared by Mr. Osborne, came to the rescue. The youngster, who had been born in the district, remembered a rock hole, at which the people of his tribe used to get water in a dry season, and, although he had not been in the ranges for years, he found the spot. There was enough water in the hole to give the horses as much water as they could drink, and to fill the tank, which enabled the team to reach the soak. Finally, after many hardships, the waggon got to Marble Bar, long after the half starved miners there had despaired of being able to get provisions from the loading. Mr. Osborne's wayside houses at the Nullagine and Western Shaw proved so successful, that he opened a large hotel and store at Marble Bar, and left their management in the hands of his partner, while he remained in charge of the Jubilee Hotel at Roebourne.

A MARK OF CIVILIZATION.

We started at one o'clock on the day following the date of our arrival at Roebourne, to go "up the road," as travelling through Pilbarra is always called by the people of the North-West. The night was to be spent at Meares' Station, thirty-five miles across the plains. So far, everything had promised well, but an untoward event that was to cut short a bright young life, prevented us from being able to take our leave of the hospitable Mr.

Roe in a cheerful frame of mind. My brother, Leonard Calvert, a collegian, aged fourteen, who had accompanied me on the tour, partly for the benefit of his health, as he had somewhat outgrown his strength, and also to enjoy the educational advantages of travel, had been slightly indisposed during the voyage of the *Australind* from Geraldton to Cossack, but we had attributed his langnor to the enervating influences of the tropical climate, to which the English-born youth had not been accustomed. In the light of later developments, it is evident that he was seriously ill, but being a lad of a high spirit he had refrained from telling anybody how much he was suffering, and, as no one on board the boat possessed medical knowledge, the boy was daily growing worse, while we were expecting him to rally as soon as he was able to rest from the fatigues of the journey. While we were breakfasting at Mr. Roe's house on the morning of our departure, my brother—who, in answer to our enquiries, had been protesting that he was feeling better—suddenly swooned in his chair, and was carried into another room to rest upon what proved to be his death bed. But even at that stage not even Dr. Hicks, who was at once summoned to attend him, had reason to suspect that the patient had sickened of the premonitory stages of typhoid fever, and, although his illness threw a gloom upon the party, we were happily spared a fore-knowledge of the melancholy truth that most of us were taking farewell of him for ever, when we went into the bedroom and wished him speedy convalescence while the four-horse drags were at the door. At the moment that the horses were about to be given their heads after we had taken our seats, the lad's courage asserted itself. He rose from his couch, and, clad in his pyjama suit, feebly made his way to the verandah, and called "good-bye." As the horses jumped off with a bound, we caught a last glimpse of our little friend overcome with the effort he had made, supporting himself against a post of the verandah. The turn of the road hid him from our sight. We dashed down the bank of the River Harding that stands at the gateway of the great goldfields' track, and on the day of our return, just three weeks later, as our tired team wearily moved at a walking pace up the incline and into the town again, the church bell was solemnly tolling the requiem for an untimely death. My brother Leonard was being laid to rest in Roebourne churchyard.

(DRAWN AT KALGOORLIE, 1895.)

Beyond the Harding River the view was full of interest. The river runs at the base of low hills of every saffron shade of colour, from the lightest yellow to the deepest orange red.

The heights are of volcanic origin, and are mantled with masses of rock of an infinite variety of outlines. If the crags were of greater size they would be majestic, but none of them rise to the altitude of more than 15 feet. Near the river there is a Japanese village. In nearly all the towns of the North-West dwell frail sisters of the East. Carnarvon alone refuses to countenance this form of the social evil. The other centres are content to ban the aliens from the European quarter. The Japanese courtesan is always young, sometimes comely, and invariably partial to plenty of soap and water. She is so fond of clean clothes that she is the chief patron of the laundries which are carried on by her countrymen. The olive-skinned Aspasia is, too, a total abstainer, and regardful of the public peace. Jap-town is always kept closely under supervision by the police, but whenever they are called upon to quell a disturbance, the European—not the alien—is found to have occasioned it. As we go by, a number of the young women watch us curiously from the doors of their houses, which

AT COSSACK.

are constantly being recruited. Nearly every boat brings or takes away some girls who are associated with these haunts of vice, which are managed with much method by older women, who act as housekeepers to the several corps. These duennas find the passage money of new arrivals, who are kept under a kind of vassalage until they have liquidated their liabilities, including extortionate interest for their loans. It is said, although I do not vouch for the truth of the allegation, that among the lower orders of Japan there prevails a very lax moral law, unchastity only being regarded as reprehensible on the part of a married woman. Whether this is a fable or not, there have been examples of women being married out of Jap-town, who from their wedding-day have lived without incurring further reproach.

A few miles of good road have been made by the Government over a low-lying portion of the Roebourne plains. The fresh horses carry us along over this bit of macadam so fast that a cool breeze is blown in our faces, and travelling through Pilbarra seems almost a

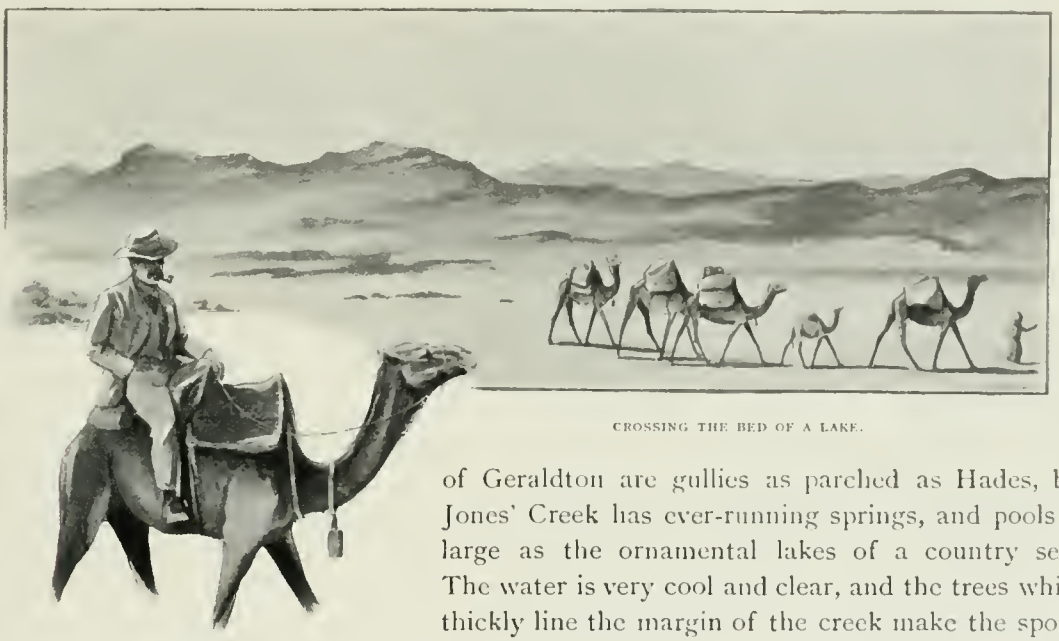
pleasant excursion. Mr. Osborne listens to these felicitations with a shade upon his face. He knows how much reason we shall have to change our tune in a few days' time, when we get far beyond the ken of the Public Works Department, and a tropical deluge may set our drags swimming in a river. It is just the time of the year for a downpour that would lay the flat country under water in a few hours, and make a roaring torrent of every creek and billabong: we discover this in a time of rude awakening a little later on. But where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise, and only our charioteer and I know how hazardous is our ride to the furthest pioneer camp of miners in the heart of the great North-West, where drought, floods, sickness, or lame horses may bar our further progress. Leaving the macadam behind us, we are on a great expanse of prairie of the richest chocolate loam, on which the dry grass is eighteen inches high. A marvellous growth of feed springs on these plains in a few weeks after rain, forming a lovely panorama, which might be mistaken for a vast cornfield, but it is not every year that heaven's artillery thunders the prelude of a drenching storm. The table-land is pleasingly diversified with

ON SHERLOCK SHEEP STATION. NOR'-WEST.

hills of various shapes, which rise detached and sentinel-like at broad intervals to the line of the horizon. The colours of these stony rises is very brilliant. Some of them in the bright afternoon sun are almost as dazzling as burnished gold, but the rich orange tint deepens in places to the hue of bronze. The shades of the outer crust of stones vary so much from a yellow mahogany, or almost black, as to put one whimsically in mind of immense plum puddings, in the making of which the cook has been liberal with the eggs and raisins. Two or three of these conical formations resemble a confection over the top of which the juice of raspberries has been so freely poured that it has run right down into the bottom of the dish, while others have these vivid purple streaks of ironstone marking an irregular line only a little way from the summit. The most conspicuous of the hills are Mount Roe and Mount Sholl, and the sight of them adds an eternal charm to Roebourne, for which the people of that sun-dried town should be very grateful to the Architect of the universe. To us the varied landscape is very pleasing after the hideous deserts through which we travelled in Yilgarn and the Murchison. For a wonder, too, it is our good

fortune to leave the dust behind us, for the wind is in front, and it agreeably tempers the heat of the day. The visitor, on his first day out from Roebourne, under these agreeable auspices, is prone to think that the North-West has been maligned by travellers' tales, who have a pleasure in inventing evil fables. We shall see. In the meantime there should be suspense of judgment.

Most of the way to Meares' Station the plains are sub-divided by fencing into large paddocks, the pasturage being too valuable to be left open to travelling stock. About twelve miles from Roebourne, Mount Oscar, the boldest peak we have yet seen, becomes clearly outlined, and then a clump of river gums denotes the line of Jones' Creek. This watercourse is modestly named in comparison with many of the so-called rivers of the North-West, which are only storm channels. In a dry season nine rivers out of ten north

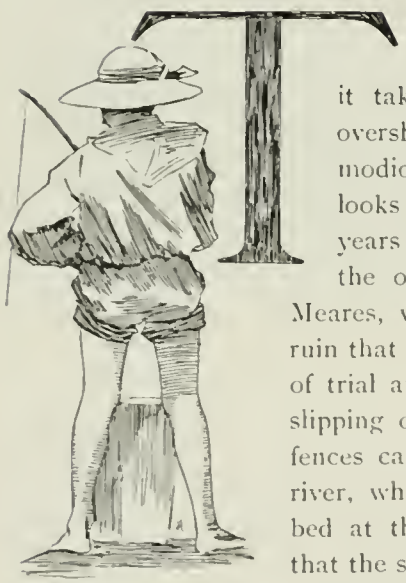


CROSSING THE BED OF A LAKE.

of Geraldton are gullies as parched as Hades, but Jones' Creek has ever-running springs, and pools as large as the ornamental lakes of a country seat. The water is very cool and clear, and the trees which thickly line the margin of the creek make the spot a favourite camping-ground, which the sojourner leaves with regret. Onward eighteen miles to the Sherlock River there is no new feature in the scenery—that is to say, some idea may be formed of it by thinking of a billiard table during a game of pool, only that the "skittles" are taller and more uniform in shape than the hills upon the plains. There is not a mile of the road over which a drag could jolt, and in a spring-hung buggy the track is like a bowling green. After having passed through a very dry season, the sheep, cattle, and horses of the Sherlock run were in excellent condition. The brood mares would have been able to do more justice to their foals on a more succulent herbage than that of the coarse straw, but this is the kind of bringing up that makes the horses of Western Australia as tough as sole leather. So long as the pace is not too fast, the horses of this country very seldom knock up. They will carry you all day, bite a bit of spinifex at night, and go on again as fresh as ever in the morning to the end of the longest journey.

Chapter 20.

Sherlock Station—A Hearty Welcome—Squatting under Difficulties—The Blacks on the Sherlock Station—The Drawbacks to Agricultural Progress—Life on a Run.



THE Sherlock Station, which we reached before sundown is pleasantly situated on the bank of the river from which it takes its name, near Mount Fraser, whose heights almost overshadow the steading. The proprietor's house is commodiously built of sawn timber and iron. The front verandah looks down upon the sloping bank of the river, which three years ago inundated the surrounding country, and swept away the original homestead and the outbuildings. Mr. and Mrs. Meares, who receive us most hospitably, describe graphically the ruin that was wrought, and the privations they endured in that time of trial and danger, the signs of which are still to be seen in the slipping of the surface soil, ravines sluiced into wide gullies, and fences carried away like thistle-down. In twenty-four hours the river, which had been dry, rose fifteen feet. The family were in bed at the time. They had retired at the usual hour, confident that the stream, despite the heavy rains, would be confined between its broad banks, but before morning they had to flee for their lives in the midst of the pitiless storm, carrying the youngest of their children in their arms, to the higher ground. When daylight came nothing was left of what had been their home. The new house has been built on an elevation much above the high-water mark of the flood, and it has been made replete with all the appurtenances required for the working of the run. In addition to the coach-house, barns, bachelors' quarters, and stables, there are huts for a large number of blacks, who make Sherlock their head-quarters, and employ their time in shepherding, watering the flocks, hunting, and boundary riding.

After dinner our hospitable host and hostess entertained us in the drawing-room. Mrs. Meares and her governess, Miss Olive, are capable musicians, and the piano and organ had a share in a concert, in which the cultured efforts of the ladies contrasted most favourably with the latest ditties of the music-halls, in which some of the members

of our party strove to do their part towards making the evening a melodious success. Mr. Meares is an excellent raconteur, and he has seen so much that is interesting, that it was equally entertaining and instructive to listen to his stirring experiences as a pioneer. He is also a sportsman, and the owner of some of the best racehorses in Western Australia. Some of his cracks were to take part in the Perth meeting, which was to be held before we returned from Pilbarra. We cordially wished that Mr. Meares' colours would be first past the post in every race. The next time we saw Mr. Meares he laughingly assured us that our good wishes had brought him good luck, for in the interval his horse, Inverary, had carried off the chief prize of the Western Australian turf, in the shape of the Perth Cup.

A LITTLE FLIRTATION.

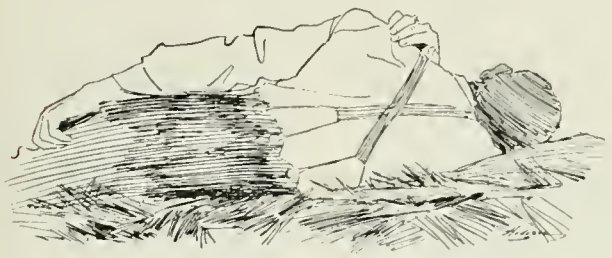
The blacks are one of the features of the Sherlock estate. About a score of them of all ages were within coo-e-ee of the house, which supplies them with rations. There were some old people past work, and a lot of children, not yet big enough to be useful, but they all flock round the flour-bin and slaughtering-pen to get a share of meat, like bees round a hive. The young people take kindly to European habits of life, and know something of the English language, but the grey-beards are irreclaimable; they are quite willing to quarter themselves on the station for food and blankets, but they prefer their own camps to a hut, and restlessly wander between the different watering-places in search of game. But even the younger generation often get an uncontrollable instinct to run wild. What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh, and a wise employer never seeks to restrain the vagrant impulse. Jake, the stock-man, or Mary, the nurse, may have been on the station as long as they can remember; to all appearance, they knew nothing, and cared nothing, of the ways of the tribe. If they had had a fairer skin and thinner lips, they might have been mistaken for European servants. They cooked, kept house, washed the family linen, or rode cleverly. There was apparently nothing of the savage about them but the colour of their skin. But a day comes now and then when Jake or Mary go to the master or mistress seeking leave of absence; they get some food, and then disappear. They have gone to join their tribe, to wear an oppossum or kangaroo skin rug, and to throw off all traces of civilisation. But in a few weeks the nomadic mood passes away, and the truants return to their service to perform their duties as

faithfully as ever until the old yearning is felt again, and if they are not given the opportunity to gratify it they will run away, and seek a fresh employer when the roving fit is over. Those who have had any experience of the natives take their occasional absence as a matter of course, and no matter how highly a domestic or a rouseabout may be valued, or how much either of them may be wanted at a busy season, permission is given to act upon the hereditary promptings without a word of remonstrance or advice. The most discreet managers treat the blacks in a very large measure as children, and with the consideration that is often extended towards a lad or a hoyden on account of the inexperience of youth. Even the adults are not expected to do the work of a white man or woman; but then it must be remembered that they do not receive the wages of capable employés. They only get food, tobacco and clothes, and, therefore, a large number of them can be kept on the principle that many hands make light work. The only way the men can be got to work with spirit is for the "boss" to work with them, unless they are tracking, when they are best left to their own devices. If they are put to a job of fencing or wood-cutting by themselves, they are prone soon to rest from their labours under the nearest shade. In the presence of strangers the natives are usually very taciturn, and preserve an expression of apathy, not to say of melancholy. Among themselves, on the other hand, they are of a very merry disposition, quick to perceive the ludicrous, and to acknowledge the discovery with a huge display of gleaming ivories, as long as they think they are unobserved. But at the approach of a stranger all their gaiety is eclipsed so completely, that one who had not watched them at their gambols, would think that they had never been known to smile or even to talk more than a monosyllable at a time. An old employer can sometimes get them to relax a little, but even with him they are more often as close as an oyster. On one occasion we had to take a black boy to show us a waterhole, and during the whole stage of the journey we could not get him to open his mouth. Mr. Osborne, who is familiar with the habits of the natives, with whom he has long been in contact, exerted all his persuasiveness in the aboriginal

A DYING RACE.

DAINTY PLUM PUDDING.

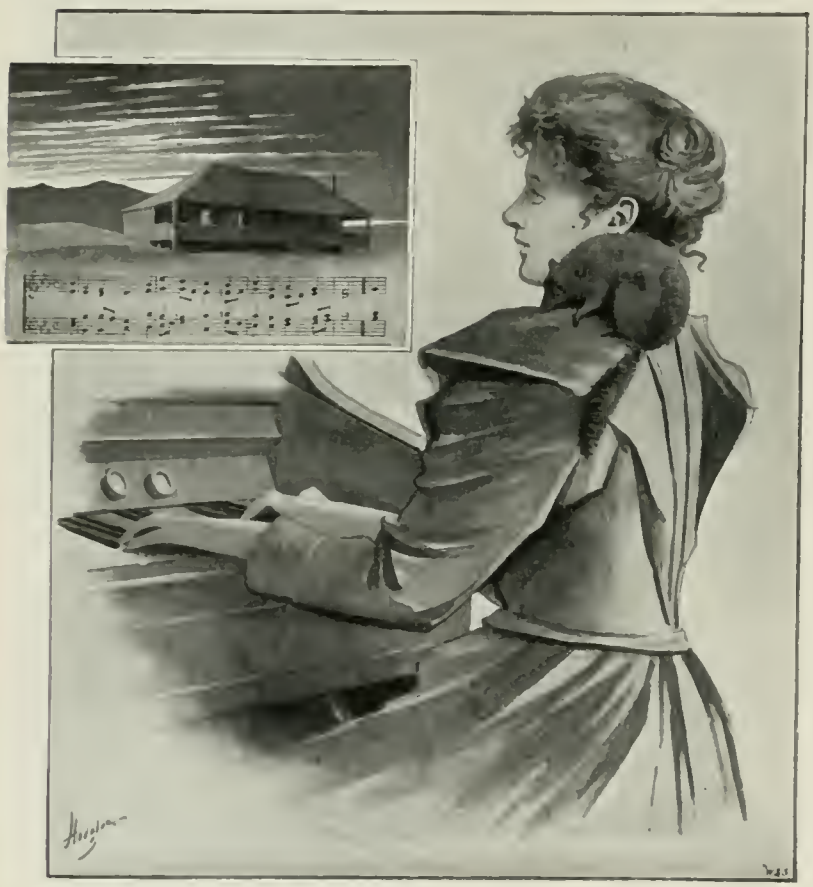
tongue to dispel the timidity of the boy, but he quite failed to rouse him. He seemed to be engrossed in a painful reverie, as though he never expected to escape from our clutches with his life, and was deeply meditating how he could outwit us. At the same time he showed that he was keenly alive to all that was going on, by performing his office as guide with the greatest watchfulness. Whenever there was a turn in the road, or the tracks diverged, the lad would point mechanically to the right or to the left, like the arms of a semaphore, without speaking a word. When we stopped for the night the boy sat on the ground at some distance from the camp, and he would, to all appearance, have gone without a bite rather than have indicated any desire to share in our supper. On being given some food, which had to be taken to him, he received it as humbly as a whipped hound crouching under the lash of a gamekeeper, and then he threw himself down under a tree without expecting to get a blanket to cover him. As far as we could observe, all through the North-West, the black has a strong, almost an overwhelming sense of the superiority of the white race, and is servile, not to say abject, in the presence of his keeper. And yet this does not appear to be the result of ill-treatment; on the contrary, we had evidences that the aboriginals are so much valued, especially by men who travel with horses, and who look to the "nigger" to recover the animals from the unfenced bush every morning, that even if it were only for selfish motives, it would not be judicious to severely chastise a servant whose natural home is in the wilds, and who, therefore, could run away at a moment's notice. The feeling and demeanour of humility that so strongly characterises the dusky servitor, appears to be attributable to the moral force which is more or less unconsciously exerted by the European, who, as the heir of ages of enlightenment, of intellectual growth, and also of muscular development, makes him, in the estimation of the savage, the personification of powers, and of energy of a kind to which he feels that he can lay no claim.



A BED OF SPINIFEX.

NATIVE CHILDREN.

As it was necessary for us to get well on our way before the sun was high in his power, Mrs. Meares was kind enough to have breakfast served soon after daylight next morning. In spite of our hurried departure, we found time to photograph a number of interesting views of the station, the blacks, and the river scenery, depicting the ravages of the flood. The fierce rush of the flood swept bare a large area of grass land, which is slowly becoming re-clothed with herbage. A sowing of grass seeds just before a fall

of rain, would quickly repair the mischief, but the North-West is not yet ripe for improvements of this kind. The climate has a great deal to do with cramping the efforts of the pastoralists to redeem their runs from a state of nature. The want of labour is another heavy handicap against rapid progress. The blacks are not to be depended upon as steady workers, and where Europeans can get £4 per week in the mines, they pass the squatters by. Hence it is with a full appreciation of the difficulties of their position, and in no snarling spirit, that I draw any comparison between squatting, say, in Riverina, and in the North-West. The conditions being wholly different, it is not surprising that the results vary so much as to be almost startling to a southerner, who has been accustomed to associate wool raising with a palatial residence on a noble river, with orchards and conservatories surrounding the homestead; with boating, fishing, duck-shooting, and everything that could make the country holiday of a city man enjoyable. But turning from luxury to utility, the contrast is still greater. In the North-West, a run is regarded as being established when a house and its auxiliaries have been built, a few wells sunk, and in rare cases, a few miles of fencing put up. There is no ring-barking, burning of scrub, or the sowing of pastures, which would soon be burnt up by the sun if they were less hardy than spinifex. No irrigated vegetable garden, or shady summer house. To live on a run in the North-West is to be banished, a stranger would think, from nearly everything that makes life tolerable. It is to swelter for eight or nine months of the year, to exchange for the exhilarating swim the clammy application of a tepid sponge, to see all through the long summer a staring brown landscape, jarring and monotonous. Nothing else is possible so near the equatorial line. Those who go to such a region, have, on the whole, a hard lot

SIR JOHN STAINER ON A SHEEP FARM.

when the few cool months have passed. If the wife should grow languid, and the colour fade out of the cheek of the children, who can wonder? "It is a poor thing, but mine own," is all that the proprietor of a run in the North-West can say, as he surveys his property. He cannot attempt to vie with the expenditure, the system of management, or the achievements of his eastern or southern compeer; for, if he were as rich as Crœsus, he would only be wasting his money if he were to spend it lavishly in such an uncongenial region. He has no careful culling of flocks, no regular importation of new blood, no enormous clips in the shearing season. The light rainfall would alone be sufficient to discourage enterprise. So the wool grower of the north has perforce to be content to occupy a very large tract of country, to guard against overstocking, to see that his swarthy henchman keep the sheep watered from the wells, and to dispose of his produce without expecting to make a fortune. In such an environment, it is not surprising that an easy going, philosophical, perhaps a phlegmatic temperament, is nourished—that state of mind in which a man is able to put up with losses with resignation, and to receive the rare blessing of a good season without elation. It is a droning, semi-somnolent kind of a life, and it must needs be so. The most active minded of men would soon find his superabundant vitality evaporating, and lassitude taking its place. Don't attempt too much: the game is not worth the candle; a makeshift will do—seem to be the unwritten rules of conduct far back from the sea-board. In setting these things down, no reproach is intended to our friends, who were so full of kindness, and who did so much for our welfare at every stage of the journey. It is only desired to convey a faithful reflex of the country, and the most approved modes of living there. The heat is quite exhausting enough without the added strain of the various engrossing activities of more civilised life. In other words, the people of the far north wisely adapt themselves to their surroundings, and surely it is not derogatory to them to approve their discretion, and to describe some of their disabilities. If they were not men and women of rare hardihood, they would not be found in a place that is so unfavourable to the development of the English race. Hence it will readily be believed that, mentally and physically, the population is of a superior type. The north is not a place for weaklings or poltroons; the inexorable local law is that of the survival of the fittest. But, as showing the influence of climate and surroundings, in relaxing even the toughest human fibre, in toning down the most indefatigable energy to a habit of slower impulses, and

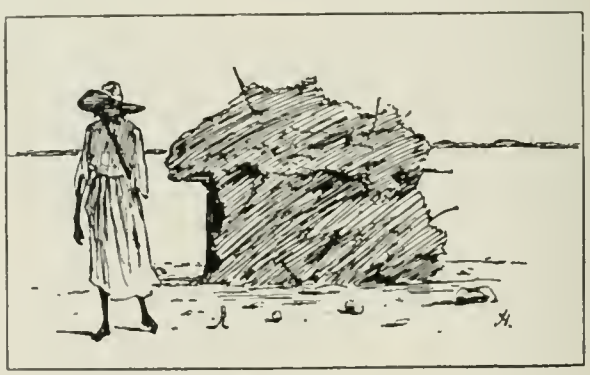
BUSH BLOOM.

A MINER.

a desire to "take things easy," it is both interesting and instructive to make some allusion to the characteristics of the north and its residents. So far shalt thou come and no farther, is the warning inscribed on the face of the country, to any innovator who would attempt to make this division of the Colony blossom as the rose, verdant with lucerne paddocks, or dotted with fields of ripening grain. The wealth of the world would not suffice to change the aspect of the country, because this could only be done by irrigation, and there is no water available for this purpose. The land must be utilised as it is with very little outlay, for a large expenditure could not be expected to earn a profitable return. The only way to avoid a loss, is to keep down working expenses, rely upon the most hardy kinds of stock, and not overtask the carrying capacity of the area, so that times of drought may be tided over. The run holders sensibly recognise that it is no use beating the air by vainly aspiring to revolutionise the forces of Nature; with better judgment they accept things as they are, without wearing themselves out, and courting disappointment by seeking to emulate the methods, the outlay, or the labour, which are so wisely lavished upon less intractable localities in more kindly climes. Nevertheless, the contrast between a sheep run in the East, and a sheep run in the North-West, is full of melancholy reflections to any one who is able to look on this picture and on that—the presentment of two properties called by the same name, but which are wholly, strikingly, and gruesomely different.

ON THE ROAD TO MALLINA, NOR'-WEST. A TEAMSTER RESTING.

About twelve miles from the Sherlock, we came to one of the wells of the run. The watering place was in charge of a native and his gin, who have to water some thousands of sheep every day. The water, which is very pure, is drawn from a depth of about thirty-five feet; the supply is inexhaustible in the dryest season. A long row of troughs lead from the well, and it is the duty of the blacks to keep these replenished, so that the thirsty flocks may slake their thirst without delay, when they come in from the feeding grounds. The aboriginals assisted with great alacrity to tend our horses. An ostler expecting a



"THE GIN GASPED WITH EXPECTATION."

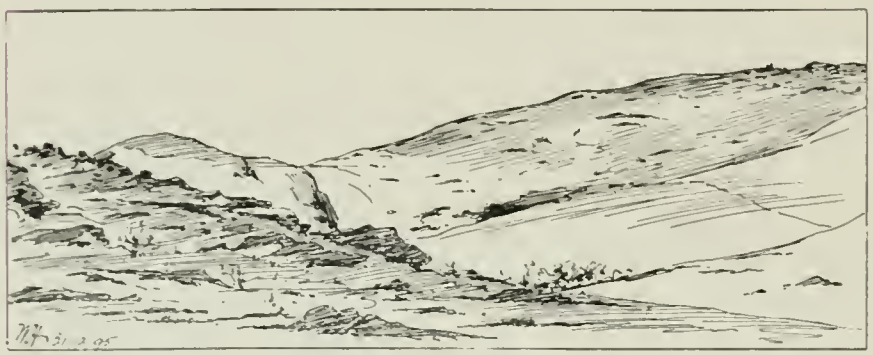
liberal tip from a driving party home from the races after they had backed the Derby winner, could not have worked with greater ardour. The driver, who was smoking a short black pipe, at which the natives cast eager glances, took in the situation at a glance. "The niggers are out of tobacco," was his sententious comment, "or they'd let us water for ourselves." Ginx was right. At the sight of a plug Peter's eyes gleamed, and the gin gasped with expectation. They had one pipe between them, and while Peter filled it his wife watched him with rapturous yearning. The pair sat on their haunches in their mia-mia, till the short clay had been deftly packed, silently anticipating the bliss that was to come. Then the gin produced two matches from the recesses of a piece of bark.

A SOAK IN THE DESERT.

They were precious vestas, for it would take a long time to get a light by rubbing two sticks together. The lighting of the pipe was a momentous experiment; the matches were old, and frayed. One of them ignited, sputtered, and went out. The gin, with an expression of alarm, crept closer to Peter, holding his battered hat to shield the infant flame, muttering words of fearful warning. Peter nervously rubbed the other match on the rough horny skin of the sole of his foot in vain, and blank disappointment was writ large in the tawny faces of the pair. The longed-for smoke was still so near, and yet so far, but the gloom of the household was lifted by the proffer of a light by a bystander, who was not callous to human suffering. To see that pipe passing from mouth to mouth, like a stick of

confectionery, at which two schoolboys take unctuous and alternate sucks, was to realise that sometimes at least it is more blessed to give than to receive.

At Whim Creek, which lies between Mount Negri and Mount Browne, eighteen miles from the Sherlock, we stopped for our first *al fresco* luncheon. A copper mine, at present idle, lies a little off the main road. An empty store near the well was an excellent camping place, and here our host, Mr. Osborne, unpacked his store of good things. When the cloth was laid, it was evident that we were to have a picnic if he could make one. It was, indeed, a rare menu to be seen in that wilderness, conjuring up as it did the fertility of southern Europe, and the game preserve of England. In the desert solitudes of Whim Creek, the sight of the viands created visions of a dark-skinned peasantry, of cottages embosomed in fruit and foliage, of thickly clustering tillage plots, teeming with the harvests of diligent cultivation. While we were refreshing ourselves, a figure—as strange as that of the knight Don Quixote, and riding a more meagre steed than Rosinante—approached round a bend in the road. The horseman was an old weazened man, with a long white beard. He was very short, very brown, and his features were as rugged as the gnarled roots of a briar tree. The man, the trappings, the horse, were all very much the worse for wear. The patriarch was the image of Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle. As he came up astride the decayed fragment of a saddle and the skeleton of a horse with a hide hung upon it, we eyed him with the greatest curiosity. His bridle, saddlebags, and clothing, were a motley patchwork of bits of leather, moleskin, cloth, and scraps of blanket. A mounted Egyptian mummy would scarcely have been a more remarkable apparition. "Any luck, Peter," asked Mr. Osborne, as the ancient jade stopped at the store. "No,"



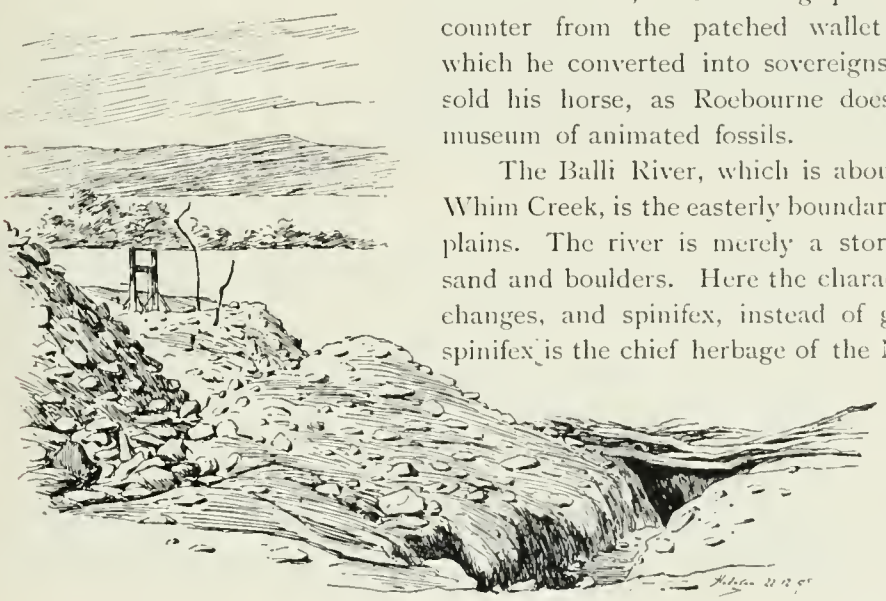
WHIM CREEK COPPER MINE.
(The workings are on the right-hand eminence.)

"THE HORSEMAN WAS AN OLD WEAZENED MAN."

harshly croaked the veteran, and his parchment skin seemed to crackle as he spoke; "I never have any luck; Iv'e been going up and down this country now for nigh on thirty-five years, and I never do any good." "Well, come and have some lunch," said Mr. Calvert. The old man of the woods—with "crow's feet" about his eyes that no bird could imprint in such deep intaglio, and lines around his nose and mouth livid enough for brands—did not need to be asked twice. He slipped off his ghost of a horse, and set to work with a sharp appetite, the creases of the dried jaws opening out like the convolutions of a concertina, as each large mouthful was inserted. All the while his gaunt steed watched him with an eye of famine. Peter at length being fully satisfied, took from his wallet some lumps of damper, as horny as remainder biscuit after a voyage, and breaking them with his "napping" hammer, allowed the half starved beast to eat them. Peter becoming talkative, told us that he was a "hatter," in other words, that he never had a mate when he was fossicking in the ranges. It was "poor game," he said, and times had at last got so bad that he was going into Roebourne to sell his horse, and try to get a job on wages to fill the "tucker bag," before he could go "up the road" again. Peter, whom we left with many condolences, must have "struck it lucky" somewhere on the highway before he got to town, for on our return we saw him in a new suit of clothes, after having produced at the bank counter from the patched wallet 15 ozs. of gold, which he converted into sovereigns. But he had not sold his horse, as Roebourne does not yet boast a museum of animated fossils.

A MINER.

The Balli River, which is about three miles from Whim Creek, is the easterly boundary of the Roebourne plains. The river is merely a storm channel, full of sand and boulders. Here the character of the country changes, and spinifex, instead of grass, is seen. As spinifex is the chief herbage of the North-West, it may be worth while to say a little about it. Spinifex, of which there are three kinds, is a shrub on which wiry spines grow luxuriantly. The shrubs grow pretty closely together, so that, unless you are walking over the ground, the bare patches between them are not seen. As a fodder plant, the value of spinifex



DRIFT OF THE STRAY SHOT, MALLINA.

varies according to the season of the year, and the variety to which it belongs. In the spring the feed is almost succulent, and it is very fattening, but in midsummer imported stock would find it very hard to eat. The coarsest species is what is known as "old man spinifex," which even the native horses turn from in disgust, so tough and prickly is its growth. The choicest variety of the shrub is not very nutritious after it is dried up, but North-Western horses, cattle, and sheep, are not accustomed to being pampered. They vie with the donkey in being able to eat anything more digestible than horse shoe nails. Spinifex is to them what salt junk and mouldy biscuit are to a whaling crew, but whaling tars are very hardy on "hard tack," and so are the stock of the spinifex districts. They do not fatten, it is hardly necessary to say, while drought is in the land, but it is rare that excessive mortality takes place, and when the rain comes, flesh is quickly put on. At such times there is a wonderful growth of luscious feed, but spinifex is the only fodder through the summer months. The softer and choicer grasses have been burnt off the ground, leaving it, where there are no shrubs, as bare as flagstone. The Mitchell grass lasts the longest of any of this class of vegetation, but it is only to be found in a few flats near what, after a thunderstorm, becomes a watercourse. Mitchell grass is, indeed, so rare, that it can hardly be taken into account in estimating the carrying capacity of the runs. The teamsters always camp on a patch of Mitchell grass, whenever want of water does not compel them to hurry on to the nearest well. On the other hand, spinifex is found everywhere; no ground is too dry or too stony, and it defies extermination in the worst seasons. In 1893 there was a very severe drought, accompanied by heavy losses of stock, but since that year there has been a fair rainfall. Spinifex seed is a favourite article of food among the natives. It resembles millet, and on being ground, produces a palatable flour. To prepare the seed for use, a couple of flat stones are used by the blacks to beat it into a powder, which is mixed with water, and toasted into cakes.

A RESIDENT OF MALLINA.

MINE AT MALLINA.

A LITTLE NATIVE HUMOUR.

It is a peculiarity of the North-West that rain falls not during the winter months, but in December or January. If those months should pass by without bringing any thunderstorms, the outlook is regarded with gloomy forebodings. The squatters foreseeing a drought, hasten to sell as many of their cattle and sheep as they can find a market for, and the teamsters raise their freights. Some of them find the scarcity of feed telling so severely upon their horses, that they retire from the road altogether until better days, while others struggle on carrying a bit of feed, but not nearly enough to keep their teams in good working order. On our route traces of the lateness of the rains were observable in the emaciation of some of the horses, which we saw upon the track. The feed along the road was verging on exhaustion; if a welcome change did not come soon, it would be closed to waggoners, who were not in a position to get horse feed at the port. Unhappily, the North-West has been getting dryer of late years, marring seriously the prospects of the pastoralists. Up to ten or a dozen years ago the rainfall, while never abundant, was yet regular and sufficient to keep the rank herbage of the territory in good heart, but latterly the rains have been confined within a narrower range. It has occurred that while a heavy thunderstorm has almost deluged one tract of country, another, only a few miles a way, has had a succession of cloudless skies.

THE "MOB" IN THE DUST.

Chapter 21.

An Aboriginal Travelling Party—A Libel on Humanity—Mallina—A Blissful Bath—Mallina as a Goldfield—A Suffocating Day—A Tropical Thunderstorm—"Tommy"—The Pleadings of the Parched North-West—A Story of the Egina Well.

MIDWAY between Whim Creek and Mallina, where we were to halt for the night, a travelling party of "wild," that is to say uncivilised, blacks crossed the road. It was the remnant of a tribe who live almost nude in their own camps, find most of their food by spearing game, and know no language but their own. The majesty of the aboriginal warrior, as long "as wild in the woods the naked savage ran," is to be seen in the band which is approaching. The men—tall, sinewy fellows—step out jauntily in front of the procession, laden with nothing save a handful of spears, and very little more encumbered with clothes than Adam at his birth. The uniforms they wear are "nothing much before, and scarcely more than half of that behind." They make the pace very warm for the gins, who bring up the rear, loaded like camels. There is a sight which makes the toes itch. Two or three women stagger along, bending double. In God's name, what a libel on humanity! The first woman to pass us carried on one shoulder a freshly-slain kangaroo, on the other, a roll of blankets; in one hand, a bag of flour; in the other, the entrails, lungs, and heart of one of the sheep of the Mallina butcher; while perched on the nape of her neck, with his legs dangling below her hanging breasts, was a sturdy piccaninny, six or seven years old. The other women carry loads that would tax the back of a Shetland pony; and with the blurred features of over-tasked nature, labour along in the rear of the sleek, glossy-skinned, hulking males, to whom they yield obedience. What martyrs to motherhood these wretched women are. Their maternal solicitude would be ridiculous if it were not so pathetic. It makes one yearn to tear those imps of darkness from their perches. Ride pickaback, forsooth, when they could trot nimbly for many a mile! I would put in every

THE "GROWL," MALLINA.

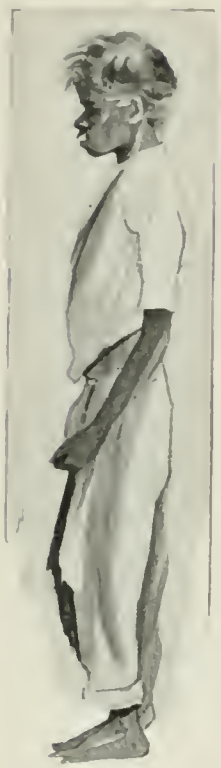
dusky mother's "hand a whip to lash the rascals naked, through the world." Civilization, after all, has done a lot for women in throwing the physical burdens of life upon the stronger sex, and still more in making woman an object of veneration, instead of abasement. These grisly harridans whom we see in our travels, are the abject slaves of their husbands or brothers. They are fed like dogs with the leavings of the feast—if haply there should be any—after the men—who would think it demeaning to do anything except hunt, wander, and sleep—have gorged themselves. They are as sleek as racehorses, while the miserable women of the tribe are as ragged as a door mat, and as ugly as sin—the most repulsive-looking and skeleton-legged race of females on the face of the earth.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN AND CHILD.

We are rising in the world for the remainder of our ride to Mallina. The buggies wind in and out between the hills, more thickly massed than those on the Roebourne plains, but otherwise they resemble each other almost as closely as the two Dromios. The road is not steep, but the aneroid shows that we are getting higher above sea level. About two miles from Mallina there is a dry creek, on the banks of which there are the relics of some old station buildings, and of a stock-yard fence. A well sunk in the bed of the creek is full of spring water, and beyond is the Mallina plain. A short drive brings us to the roomy hotel of one story, which is sprouting additions on every side. It is Saturday afternoon; the stampers of the Mallina Mine are silent, and the bar is noisy with callers for drinks, for pay day has not long passed. The miners are all in shirt sleeves, smoking like limekilns, and are in a convivial mood; none of them are drunk or disorderly. The ivories in the billiard room are clicking sharply, denoting that there is plenty of power in the strokes of muscular players. The "yard" of the hotel—a hill of rock—has been honeycombed in search of the lead of the Mallina lode. It being exemption time, some of the miners are "going south," before work is in full operation again. Just as we arrived, a party of five had started to walk seventy miles into

MID-DAY OCCUPATION.

Roebourne, expecting to be two days on the road. In order to avoid the heat of the day, they had planned to walk all night. Others are waiting for the coach, as there are not many holiday attractions in Mallina, the real estate of which an auctioneer might catalogue—as three houses, an hotel, and a store. A bath is a luxury, for which the town has to thank the Chinese cook. He yokes up a horse, and fills a reservoir from the well, which is as inexhaustible as the widow's cruse of oil. The bather dips a couple of buckets of water out of the tank to fill a keg, which runs up overhead on a pulley. The thrilling joy of the shower is as blissful as it is transient. In five seconds the keg, with a sputter and a gurgle, is empty. The delicious cascade is over like a dream of rapture, to haunt us tantalisingly all through the remainder of our pilgrimage in the red swart land. The bath is free to all, except the Chinese cook, but the miners unkindly say that he never wants to wash himself. At all events he draws the water uncomplainingly. We asked the landlord whether he had ever heard of the Scriptural injunction against muzzling the ox that treads out the corn, but he only looked perplexed. They do not seem to know nearly so much about Bibles as of reefs and leases in Pilbarra. Perhaps our host would have had a quicker apprehension of the text on gold, that has passed through the fiery furnace, being twice purified.



ABORIGINAL BOY.

Mallina, as a goldfield, was discovered in January, 1892, but the locality had been a sheep station for nearly fifty years prior to that date. The story goes that a lad named James Withnell picked up a stone to throw at a herd, and seeing it glitter he took it home, when it was found to be auriferous quartz. The alluvial workings, which at one time were very profitable, are now supposed to be exhausted, but reefing country is just beginning to be developed. The Mallina, the chief mine in the district, has put through some crushings, of the result of which little is publicly known, but it is generally considered in the neighbourhood that the property has not been worked to the best advantage. At the date on which we write, the proprietary Company, which is largely composed of Scotch investors, is making a change in the management. It is admitted that the leasehold has produced some splendid assays Close to it some excellent reefs have been found, and as Pilbarra is within a reasonable distance of the coast, and there is plenty of water to be had at a depth of about fifty feet, the outcome of the present year's work is looked forward to with the liveliest expectation of important and profitable yields being obtained. The Stray Shot is within a few yards of the hotel. It was inspected by several members of our party, who saw gold showing freely in the face. Many owners of reefs were anxious that we should see

ABORIGINAL WOMAN IN MOURNING.
(Hair matted with white earth.)

them, and I resolved to devote the next day to the work, as the horses which were to take us to Pilbarra were very much in need of a rest.

At daylight the sun was frightfully hot, sirocco was blowing with the force of a hurricane. It was a day that killed several people at Perth and Marble Bar, and was fraught with disaster for us. After breakfast a ball of fire seemed to glow at white heat in the heavens, and the west wind blew like the blast from a brick kiln. There was a general disinclination to do anything but lie and pant on the verandah, which was strewn with mattresses, like the wards of a camp hospital after a battle. The glass showed 117 in the shade, but the sickly lassitude, felt by everyone, showed that the wind was more oppressive than the heat. It brought a stifling feeling with it that made even seasoned residents of the North-West gasp for breath, like hunters at the end of a long run. To recline at full length, was fatiguing; to move, was to run the risk of heat apoplexy. It was a day when perspiring Europeans could do nothing but sigh for punkahs and iced drinks, and natives were glad to crawl into the shade. Most of us were able to fervently congratulate ourselves that we had nothing to do, but Mr. Brenton Symons and I were not to be deterred from entering upon a heavy day's work. We had promised to go to Towranna and several other mines, about twenty-five miles away, and we made up our minds to keep our engagements, no matter what the consequences might be. We must go then or not at all, and as we had come all the way from England to inspect the mines, we resolved with more courage than discretion to perform our duty to those who had entrusted their business interests to our keeping. At three o'clock, when we returned from the first trip, we had done more than enough for one day, but we were as immovable as before in our resolution to finish our task. A fresh pair of horses were put in, and out across the fiery plains we went once more. On getting back to the hotel, I was visibly ill, feverish, and unable to eat. I ought not to have attempted to go any farther without a rest, but as the wind had now changed and the sun had set, I considered it imperative that we should go on, and camp at the next well that night. We set out with forebodings which everyone felt, and none cared to express. The night itself seemed to presage evil. The air was almost suffocating; it was so dense and warm, and across the sky rolled black clouds, which were riven with brilliant flashes of forked lightning, following each other as quickly as the strokes of sword play. A thunderstorm—a tropical storm—was

THE PEEWAH, MALLINA.

HILL AND BUSH, NOR'-WEST.

about to break: deafening peals shook the earth. A fierce squall swept masses of blinding dust along the road, so that even the driver could not see his horses. He could only guess the track, and find out that he had lost it by striking a tree, a rock, or overturning the trap in a gully. Just as we approached the Peewah river, the storm reached its height. The river is not a pleasant place to cross even in daylight, the banks being steep, and the bed of the channel full of entanglements bordering the wheel marks. The intense blackness of the night when the lightning was not flashing, was deepened at the river by the foliage of the trees growing on its banks. We had just reached the spot when the simoon smote us with redoubled fury. The blast shrieked and roared like a thousand fog-horns; the wind became insufferably hot, as if the world had taken fire, or Satan had

NOR'-WEST LIGHTNING.

opened the gates of Sheol. It was an awesome time in such a place, at such an hour. We turned our backs to the tempest and waited, not knowing whether we should have to wait minutes or hours for it to lull, and expecting momentarily to be drenched with sheets, not drops of rain. Whatever came it was impossible to get the slightest shelter, for a tent would have been blown away like a wafer—made mere sport of Boreas. The situation was a critical one, for by this time I was feeling intensely ill. There was no medical aid nearer than Roebourne, and there was the probability of the country being made impassable by a downpour. The failure of our expedition seemed inevitable, and that might be the least of our misfortunes. In truth, serious trouble was only beginning, but for the time being it passed away. The hurricane soon spent its fury; the clouds travelled rapidly to the

eastward, and only a few drops of rain fell, and we were able to cross the river and go on to the well. After watering the horses in the dark—the lantern candles having run into oil with the heat of the weather—I had developed all the symptoms of sunstroke, and had severe pains in my head. I was strongly advised to at least take a rest by halting for a day or two before taxing my strength further, but in my anxiety to accomplish my purpose, I was deaf to all admonitions. I knew that lost time could not be made up again, and that to lie by as they desired me to do would be tantamount to abandoning the tour beyond Marble Bar, which, as Talga Talga and Bamboo Creek were new mining districts which had been opened up since my last visit to the North-West, I had set my mind on performing. I declared that I could rally from the seizure, but my strength of will misled me as to the seriousness of the stroke, and I afterwards paid the penalty of my stubbornness.

A PROPHET.
(Some little distance after the fact.)
"Didn't I *tell* yez the counthry was auri-furious?"

At the well next morning we found the teamster, who nearly a month before had left Roebourne with a load of compressed fodder, for the sustenance of our horses on the journey. The driver, a portly man of about fifty years of age, was an odd contrast to a little scrap of black humanity scarcely bigger than a monkey, who is his constant companion in his long journeys into the interior. The diminutive Tommy looked pitiful enough as he crouched on the seat of the cart when it was ready to start; he would have been an object of derision to schoolboys if they had seen him in town, but theirs would have been the laugh of the foolish. Tommy is a man, and a good one at that; they would be puling infants crying for a guide, if not for a nurse and a doctor, in the bush, where they would probably find an early grave. The black pigmy, shirtless, hatless, with the eye of a hawk, the sinew of a weasel, living on the simplest fare, sleeping in the open, rising before daylight, and defying the scorching sun, is his master's Mascotte. Ask the burly waggoner what he would take for his willing little slave, and the price might be expected to buy half the boys in civilised Christendom. Fancy one of them going out into the wilds, to try and find the horses!

The waggon, with the tiny native, looking like a crow on a bough, crept away at the slow walk that a diet of summer spinifex confers, while our horses, refreshed with corn, went off with a bound over mile after mile of spinifex country. It was a brown landscape of

MAY —

waterless plains, interspersed with hills and dry creeks. Churchill might have been in the heart of the North-West when he wrote:—

> Far as the eye could reach no grass was seen,
> Earth, clad in russet, scorned the lively green;
> The plague of locusts they secure defy,
> For in three hours a grasshopper must die;
> No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
> But the chameleon, who can feast on air.
> No birds, except as birds of passage, flew,
> No bee was known to hum, no dove to coo;
> No stream, as amber smooth, as amber clear,
> Were seen to glide, or heard to warble here.
> * * * * * * * * *
> No flowers embalmed the air.

There is a little poetic license in the picture if it is to be applied to Pilbarra, but only a little in the summer time.

The Government wells *en route* are an inestimable boon, but they are much too far apart, as the Director of Public Works would find if he travelled over the road.

He would soon learn that a water supply that is adequate for the Murchison, is altogether insufficient for the North-West, where, to avoid suffering, there must be a very "short time between drinks," for both men and horses. The drinks, too, are as deep as they are frequent, a quart of water being only a "nip," that is taken a couple of times in an hour. The horses are to be pitied in having to travel twenty miles from one well to another. Half the distance would be quite enough. It is moving to see the unfortunate beasts which have been flogged along, getting plenty of whip-cord in lieu of water, bury their heads past their eyes in the troughs, when at last a watering station is reached. They can scarcely be made to stand while the harness is being taken off. The dearth of water is hard enough on the coach horses; the slower travelling waggon teams are in a more evil case. They are watered in the cool of the morning when they are not very thirsty, and before the day

—AND DECEMBER.

has grown hot they have left the reservoir. In a few hours they are distressed, and towards the afternoon it is cruel to drive them further without water, but they are still a long way from the nearest well. They are fortunate if they do not have to make a "dry camp" by sundown. A dry camp means that a teamster must go on with his waggon, or if the horses are too exhausted to drag the load, that they must be unyoked, driven to water, and brought back again to where the freight was left. It is surprising that the North-West has been so patient under such exactions, which break up the hours of rest, and considerably lengthen the journeys of the teamsters. A strong case can be made out to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to improve the water supply. No work is more urgently needed; none has a better claim upon public funds, for water is one of the necessaries of life; to provide it, is not only a task of necessity, but also of humanity. The Public

"ALL ABOARD!"

Works Department, when it is asked for a well, returns the stereotyped reply that it will be sunk as soon as the Government gang is available. The sleepy officials are far too inert to think of letting the job by tender, although plenty of labour can be obtained, and water could be struck at a shallow depth in soft strata. The crying needs of the public, the drought of men and beasts, are nothing to a staff who live in the cool region of Perth, and have water laid on to their houses. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound." The thirst of the North-West is a skeleton in the official cupboard that can be locked and kept out of sight. It is not allowed to intrude its blood-shot eye and drawn visage in the Councils of the State, where noses are carefully counted before estimates of public works are framed. A new Town Hall, or other appanage of embroidery clamoured for with the voice of political support, is of urgent importance; the pleadings of the parched North-West for water, are poured into deaf ears.

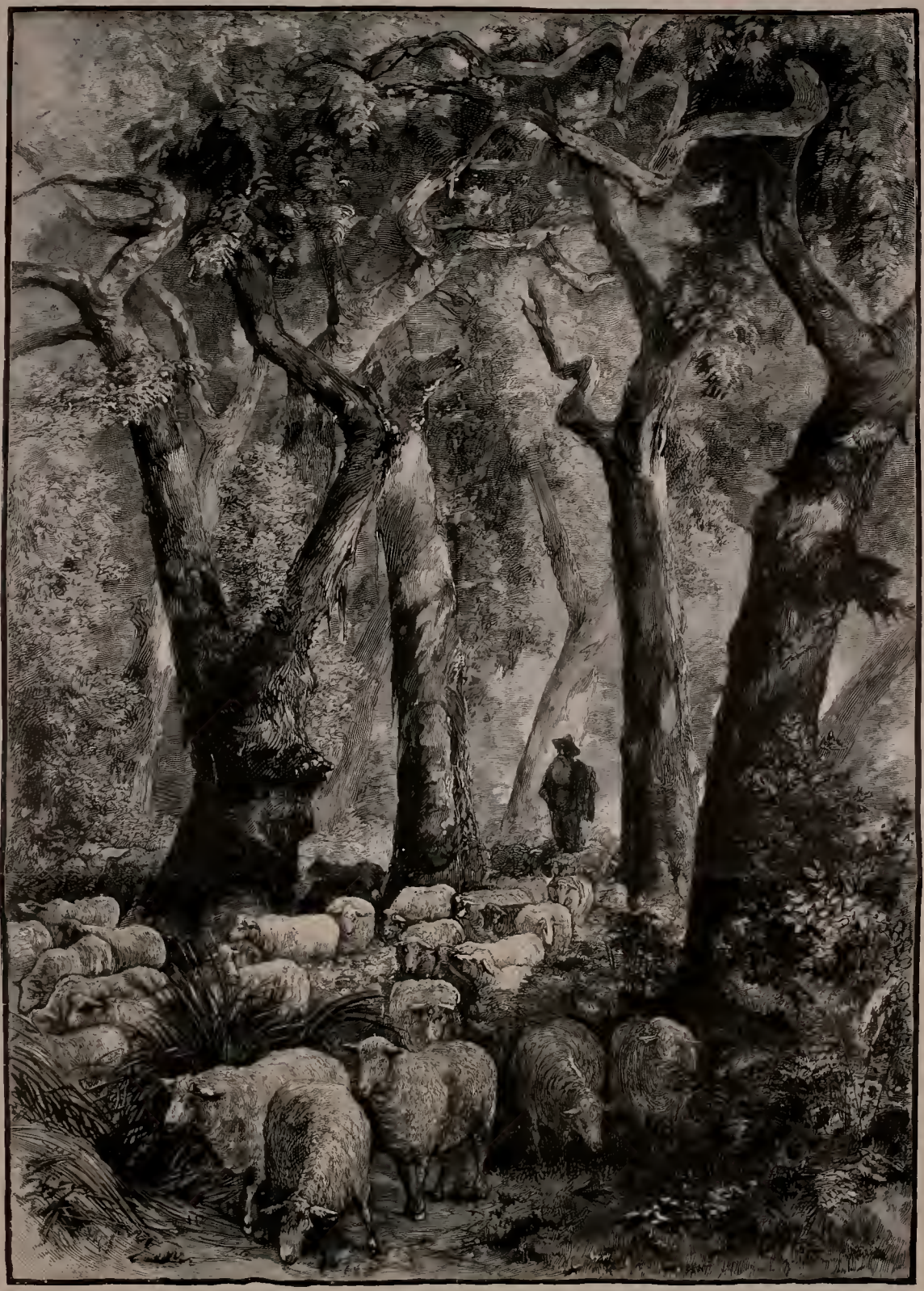
A thrilling story is told by Mr. Osborne about the old Egina well, as we pass about twenty miles from Pilbarra. Two years ago a teamster went to water his horses at the

well, which is some distance off the road. The timbering at the edge was very rotten, and in hauling up the bucket the man fell in. He was not much hurt, but he must have thought it would have been better to have been killed, so appalling was his situation, beyond all hope of rescue. The old well was unused, the Government having sunk another near the track, and two or three miles further on. He must lie in his living grave, and perish slowly of starvation. It might be days before any one passed that lonely way, and if a solitary traveller did go by, he could not hear the agonised cry for help of the dying prisoner. In the water up to his chin, he became inspired with a gleam of courage that he might be able to save himself by climbing up the rope before his strength gave way. It was a desperate expedient for a bruised man. The well was thirty-five feet deep: the ray of daylight glimmering at the top lost itself in darkness half way down the shaft. The rope was his only chance of salvation. He grasped it, and began to battle for his life, raising himself inch by inch, with his feet pressing for a foot-hold against one side of the well, and gained about twenty feet, when he fell exhausted to the bottom. The last resource of the doomed man had failed; in torturing suspense nothing remained to him but to count the lingering hours closing round his hideous fate, until death mercifully put an end to his sufferings, and left his disappearance an impenetrable mystery. He saw daylight pass away, and a star appear in the little patch of sky above him. The longest night of his life passed in sleepless misery. The thick coming fancies of his over-wrought mind invited him to drown himself, and end his anguish. But hark! what is that: he thought he heard a bell. No, there is no sound. He must be growing delirious, and, like the wayfarer who is dying of thirst, is beguiled in imagination by the sight of green fields and playing fountains; his awful plight is playing a trick upon his senses. Stay! there is the note of the bell again. This time he cannot be mistaken; it is nearer than it was before; he hears the sound of hoofs. The music of the brazen clangour—for it is music to his ears—grows louder and louder. A beast approaches the well. There is a deep snort above; the gleam of light is hidden. Oh, joy! Looking up he sees the head of a horse, hears the crack of a stock-whip. The wretched man makes a great cry, which is heard. The drover, after a moment's hesitation to assure himself that it is a human being in dire distress who calls—a man at the bottom of the well—rides up, dismounts, and shouts, "Hallo!" The captive was quickly hoisted with the aid of the windlass, and that night high revelry was held at the Pilbarra mining camp, over what pious people would regard as the providential straying of a horse from the mob with which it was being driven.

CURIOSITY.
AN ABANDONED LOAD.

NEAR EGINA.

THE COLONY'S EARLIEST DAYS. I.—SEEKING PASTURAGE.



THE COLONY'S EARLIEST DAYS. I.—SEEKING PASTURAGE.

Chapter 22.

A Garden in the Desert—Arrival at Pilbarra—A Hearty Welcome, and an Impromptu Supper—Failing Health—We secure our Christmas Dinner—The Phantom River of the North-West—At Yandeeraro Pool—A Miserable Stage—Look's Pool—Through the Long Night—Mr. Look to the Rescue.

AT Mullendin, a run over which we were travelling, an alluvial rush has been seen. A few dry-blowers are still at work, but the store keeper of the days of the rush has shut up shop and departed, moralising mayhap on the changing fortunes of those goldfields which do not rely upon deep, broad reefs, and crushing machinery for their permanence. A few miles from Pilbarra we pass a clay-pan, large enough to vie with the great reservoir of the famous Lady Mary Mine at Cue. All round are some splendid grass plains, on which the stock are very fat. The clay-pan looked deep, and broad enough to last through the summer, but the scorching sun had sucked up all the water before we returned, which shows how delusive is the plea of the Government that the clay-pans may be counted as wells, and that therefore the road is sufficiently watered. Further on, there is a remarkably fertile valley, on which Mitchell grass waves luxuriantly. The flat strikingly shows the patchy character of Western Australia, for it is hemmed in with barrenness. Here is land that, if it could be watered, would make the fortune of a lucerne grower. At any season of the year it would keep a beast to the acre, and bordering it so closely that a yardstick would touch it, is a stony desert, on which a rabbit would starve. In no other place in Australia is it possible to plant one foot in the wilderness, and the other in a garden.

A SURVEY "TRIG."

A LONELY BREAKFAST.

Just at the gateway of Pilbarra the country becomes mountainous. So far, we have been driving over plains, out of which the hills have risen like nodules on a tablet; for the rest of our journey we shall be among the ranges. Pilbarra occupies a little perch among the crags, like an egg in an eagle's nest. It is a place where a great deal of alluvial work was done before it settled down to reefing. The hotel and the camps of the mining men stand at the foot of what has been called Broken Hill. The Pilbarra Mine is the

property of Messrs. Martin, Walsh and party, who have brought a battery on to the ground, and are very sanguine that they have made a good investment. So far, the crushings have been confined to the tailings of the dry-blowers, as Mr. Browne, the manager, is desirous of having a general clean up before properly opening up the mine. The battery has been erected on the edge of a creek, where a plentiful supply of water is obtained within a few feet of the surface. Everyone at Pilbarra took a holiday to welcome us, and nothing could have been more cordial than their greetings. Luncheon was laid in Mr. Browne's green-house, the thick boughs of which temper the rays of the sun. We had travelled so fast, and visited so many places, that our budget of news was very acceptable to our friends who are so much isolated from the world. The state of my health alone darkened the convivial hour. I had been growing weaker during the day, but still strove to make light of my illness, feeling sure that I had only a "touch of the sun," and would be all right to-morrow. The afternoon was devoted to inspecting Broken Hill, and the burrowings of the pick and shovel miners, many of whom left for the sea-board with well filled belts and pouches.

TRACK FOR THE RAILWAY.

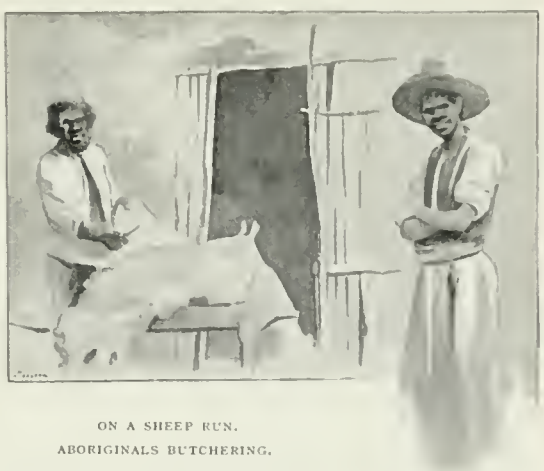
A WORKER ON THE RAILWAY TRACK.

Supper over in the arbour, we went in the cool of the evening out on to the hill-side, to enjoy a glass of wine over a good cigar. An informal toast list was gone through, our entertainers being loth to allow the occasion to pass without making special reference to the pleasure which it gave them to see us at Pilbarra. Mr. Browne, in proposing our health, was something more than kind, and the genial manager was heartily cheered by the miners who had assembled from all the surrounding district. In reply, we proposed "Success to the Goldfields of Pilbarra." The toast was drunk amid loud cheering, and then honour was done to some popular local men, including Mr. Browne, before "Auld Lang Syne" was sung, and we sought our blankets under the stars, promising Mr. Osborne that in spite of the social celebrations, we should be ready to start for Western Shaw at the first streak of daylight.

A MINER'S PET. PILBARRA

The outlet from Pilbarra on towards Wadgina is so rugged, that we walked the first mile. One of the change horses was known as Fireaway, which sufficiently indicates his temper, and we wanted him to expend his first burst of impetuosity on a smoother road. It was too far inland for one of the coaches to go somersaulting over the side of the rocky hill, so two quiet old stagers were put in to take the trap to the entrance to the defile. A mile from the town there is a little more room for oat-proud horse-flesh, and here Fireaway was yoked up. On being let go he bounded like a roebuck for the first quarter of an hour, but the break and the steadying influence of his companions brought him to a more sober frame of mind. This, with the freshness of the horses, and the briskness of the early morning, would have been one of the pleasantest of our stages, had not I been gradually sinking, while medical aid was no nearer than Marble Bar, which it would take five days to reach. We were going further and further away from the coast, and the latitudes of the salubrious south, where a sick man would have a chance of recovery. The mere thought of being sick in such a place as the back country of the North-West was unpleasant, and it got on to my nerves. To be jolting a disabled companion over ruts, stones, and stumps, exposed to a tropical sun, was terribly depressing to the party. They felt a heavy sense of responsibility, which deepened as the day advanced, and I gradually grew worse. At the well of Wadgina station, where we stopped for lunch, I was quite prostrated. I had lost flesh very rapidly during the last three days, and was very weak, but I could not face the idea of turning back. To make matters worse, the weather was now almost intolerable. One of the horses knocked up, and we had to go slowly or leave it behind, when it was turned loose to travel with the spare horses in charge of the stockman.

REPOSE—MALLINA.

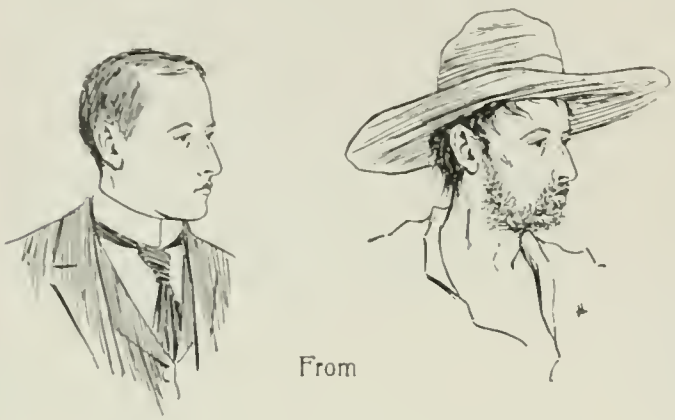


ON A SHEEP RUN.
ABORIGINALS BUTCHERING.

CHINESE COOK. PILBARRA, N.W.

On a high plain, the plateau of the range, we saw a number

of the wild turkeys which I spoke of when describing the Murchison "Zoo." The birds are usually seen in couples, but on a favourite feeding ground two or three brace may be close together. The turkeys are so much sought after to vary the monotony of what is vulgarly but expressively called "tinned dog," *i.e.*, tinned preserved meat, that they are very shy if a gunner attempts to approach them on foot, but they are tame almost to stupidity when danger approaches them on wheels. The birds are mostly found in scrubby country. They live on seeds and grasshoppers, and weigh from 12 lbs. to 15 lbs. At table their dark-coloured flesh is not so attractive to the eye as the white flesh of the turkey of the poultry yard, but most people think it is of a richer flavour, and more luscious. A wild turkey stands higher on the leg, is longer in the neck, and not nearly so full in the ear lobes as the domesticated variety, while the cock is as plain as his consort. The plains, in well sheltered country within a few miles of a water-hole, and where grasshoppers and grass seeds abound, are the favourite haunts of the bustard. In settled districts they are rarely seen, but in the great stretches of Pilbarra they are fairly numerous, although their numbers have been greatly thinned during the last few years. Passing over the plain, we soon had an example of the simple way in which these birds are shot by any one who knows their habits. A large male bird was feeding near some saplings, about one hundred and fifty yards from the road. Mr. Osborne, giving the signal to his driver, handed his reins to a passenger, and slipped from his seat to the rear of the other coach; slowly debouched from the track towards the bird, which stared intently at the horses. The trap passed a sapling within twenty yards of the gazing bird, and a charge of BB soon gave it its quietus. It is necessary to shoot these large birds at short range, as they can carry a lot of shot, especially if they are potted on the ground, when the vital parts of the body are protected by the wings.



MR. RICHARD WALSH.

Speaking of the game of the North-West, there is no better rendezvous for the sportsman than the Yandeerara Pool, on the eastern side of the mountains approaching Pilbarra from Marble Bar. This pool, by the way, is an

instance of the whimsical way in which the different local water courses have been named. Here is a lake in the centre of what in the rainy season would be a wide, deep river, but it is only known as a pool. At another place, a gully that is as dry as blotting paper, is dignified by the name of a river. The one is fed by springs, which the traveller can always be sure will satisfy his needs; the other gives out almost as soon as the down-pipe of a roof ceases to run after a shower. Yet the "River" Peewah looms large upon the map, and Yandeerara Pool diminishes on paper to the insignificance of a water-hole. The only hypothesis which can reasonably account for this antic nomenclature, is that the explorers of the North-West found the various channels in different seasons. The Yule, the Sherlock, or the Peewah "Rivers," must have been seen during a flood, while the Yandeerara Pool and Jones' Creek were apparently reached in a dry season, when all save the spring water had disappeared. I do not contend that the pools should be called rivers; but the so-called rivers should be deprived of a false distinction, which reminds one of the old fable of a jackdaw strutting in peacock's plumes. As things are, the new chum in the back blocks scans his guide book, and notes with a thrill of pleasurable expectation that he is within a few miles of a river. Thirsty, perspiring, and defiled in body, he is inspired with the vision of a long drink, of the cooling shade of umbrageous trees, of the gliding if not the rushing of waters, of the delight of laving and swimming in the refreshing stream. He strains his eyes across the dusty glare of the landscape to discern the course of the river, with much of the eagerness of Juliet

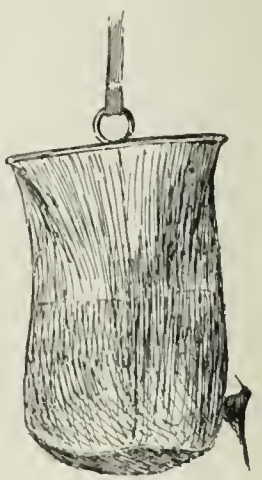
STABLE COLLEAGUES, PILBARRA.

A SIESTA.

when she invoked the speedy advent of "love performing" night. Presently, the swamp gums denoting the "river" are in sight, and the weary, sweltering traveller, cranes his neck to catch the first glimpse of the shadows of the foliage mirrored on the silvery tide. But, alas! there is no river—only dry leaves, and stones, and withered hopes.

PUBLIC SHOWER BATH.

In the Yandeerara Pool you can splash up to the waist among water lilies, and put to flight kangaroos and countless birds, that flock to this oasis in the desert. A cloud of ibis and pelicans darken the air, as they slowly float away, while flocks of small birds cut the air with a zig-zag flight like Jack snipe. The pelicans, as they go, defiantly cry in deep guttural notes, "honk, honk, honk," like a wild goose. The laughing jackass shifts his quarters to a safe distance, and utters a prolonged derisive peal; magpies, parrots, goolahs, kingfishers, scream a protest against our intrusion into the sequestered vale. The surroundings of the pool might be the home of Solitude, or the haunt of a scowling misanthrope. The low hanging boughs of the trees along the edge of the pool, the precipitous banks, the dark recesses of the all-abounding scrub, are all in mournful unison. No photograph is needed to remind us of Yandeerara Pool, its melancholy shades, the uncanny impressiveness of this abode of the water hen, and the mating place of the wigeon.



BIRD'S METHOD OF DRINKING.

The camping place that night was Look's Pool, a place of evil augury for me, having been stricken on my tour with illness there, and nearly lost my life. I was rescued by Mr. Look, of the Woodstock Hotel, who proved a good Samaritan, carried me in a state of unconsciousness to his place, about twelve miles further "up the road," and nursed me tenderly through a bad attack of fever. Nothing could have exceeded Mr. Look's kindness to the helpless stranger within his gates. He erected a temporary hospital, which was kept cool by the canvas walls being saturated with water, so that the air could create a moist vapour round my couch, and employed native women to fan me without intermission. As soon as I became strong enough to travel, Mr. Look harnessed up a fast pair of horses, and drove me in his buggy to Roebourne, inspiring, as may naturally be supposed, the warmest sense of gratitude on my part. On my present visit to the North-West, I had looked forward with the greatest pleasure to meeting Mr.

Look again, and now, after I had travelled twelve thousand miles to see my benefactor, and was nearing the Woodstock Hotel, an untoward fate had again prostrated me. Look's Pool would appear indeed to be the place of my evil destiny. The long day's travel had had a most injurious effect upon me, but although it was quite dark, we had still about eight miles to go before the exhausting stage would be over. There lay between us and the Pool a piece of very bad road, which Mr. Osborne was reluctant to attempt after sunset, but I could not permit of a "dry camp" being made, as the horses were in want of water. So we pushed on. Leaving the plain and descending a narrow gully on a stiff gradient, the wheels of the coach Mr. Osborne was driving suddenly dropped into a big hole. The trap was overturning to the off-side, when Mr. Osborne prevented a capsize by throwing himself out at the risk of his neck, but thanks to his activity and good fortune he escaped with nothing worse than some bruises, and a severe shaking. The horses were startled, but happily even Fireaway was by this time too tired to attempt to run away, which would have been an awkward experience for the passengers, as the reins had gone with Mr. Osborne. The incident in the darkness, with unknown pitfalls still before us, was not reassuring, but there was now no alternative but to proceed, whatever might befall. The sky was heavily over-cast; storm clouds were rolling up; the sky was so pitchy black that we could not see a hand in front of our faces; it was a darkness that could "be felt." Not a star lighted the way, and we had to grope along, expecting every moment to be wet through by heavy rain before we got to the Pool. After going on for another hour and-a-half at a walking pace, and crossing a couple of gullies, the coaches ran into a bed of sand, into which the wheels sank so deeply that we got out and walked on to the Pool—which we could not see, but knew to be near from the hoarse chorus of croaking frogs which rose dismally from the little marsh. By this time I was delirious, and had to be lifted out of the coach in which I had been riding for fourteen hours, and a bed was made for me on the sand under a calico screen, which was the nearest approach we had to a tent. The night was growing stormier—the prelude, as it seemed, of a severe thunderstorm. A fire was lighted, and a pretext made of supper, but it was a ghastly mockery; we were all too dispirited to eat, and my condition had now become the subject of the gravest anxiety. A general consultation was held. It was evident to all that I could not go on to the end of the journey; for none of us possessed any medical knowledge

AFTER THE "EMU."

or skill, and could not even tell how far my life might be in danger out there in the wilderness without the commonest means of relief or even protection from the sun, which to-morrow would rise as pitilessly as ever. All that could be done for me was to bathe my head with vinegar and water, and use a fan to try and abate my feverish temperature, and induce me to sleep. At last I dropped into a restless slumber. In my waking moments I could hear the members of the party discussing the situation in hushed tones, and the scraps of information that reached me gave but little comfort. The subject of their whisperings included the discussion of the best means of conveying me to the coast. But how was I to face such a long, toilsome ride. I was so feeble that they feared that I might die on the road. It was five days' journey to Roebourne, and five days in a coach, driven over even smooth, well-made roads, in a temperate climate, might be considered to be a hazardous ordeal for a sick man, but what was such a trip compared with traversing the bush tracks, the unbridged rivers, and the mountains of the North-West, in the merciless heat, and not a single resting place on the road. Moreover, supposing that I could undertake the ride, where were the horses and conveyance to come from? There was only one hope—Mr. Look, my former benefactor, might be able to help, and they unanimously determined to seek his aid. They agreed that we should start at daybreak for the Woodstock Hotel, and having arrived at that decision they, one by one, fell asleep.

A CHARCOAL BURNER'S HUMPY.

IN A GULLY.

The dull hours of the threatening night passed slowly away. Lightning played; thunder roared; rain fell. The camp fire sputtered; its flickering gleams fitfully revealed the dismal outline of the Pool at the foot of the sandhill. The trees around the edge of the water walled us in, encompassed us with blackness as dark as our thoughts. In the midst of the keen sense of desolation, the long, shrill, piercing, melancholy note of the mopehawk, rose on the ear. Nothing could have been more weird at such an hour, amid such experiences, in such a place. It was like the baying of the hounds of death. The bird, which is only heard at night, has a cry that is far more mournful than the howl of a dingo, and to me, then—worn, overwrought—the shriek of the bird that night seemed unearthly and appalling. In the tension of the

hour it seemed to be a funeral dirge: "No hope, no hope," the mopehawk called, as clearly as if the words had been spoken by a voice beyond the grave. To show that this is not an overdrawn picture, it may be as well to quote a short extract which, strangely enough, was published about the same date in the *Sydney Bulletin*. A correspondent, "Danton," wrote:—"*Re* Professor Morris's discussion of the origin of Australian words, it often strikes me while listening to the mopoke, or mopehawk, or whatever his name may be, that a name, more than any appropriate with reference to the sound of its call, and the time, as well as in association with Marcus Clarke's interpretation of Australia's dominant note, would be 'No hope.' In moments of mental depression this bird's call has had a weird suggestiveness to me. If Poe had heard the bird, 'The Raven' would hardly have been written in its present form."

MR. W. LOOK, OF WOODSTOCK STATION.

PIGEONS AT LOOK'S.

The rain passed off, and the morning was fine, when at four o'clock we began to put the horses in. A mounted messenger went on ahead to tell Mr. Look of my illness. Mr. Look was as good as gold. It was Christmas Day, and the festive miners and teamsters made the house too noisy for an invalid, so Mr. Look got ready for me a shady place under boughs, where there was a free current of air, and I was able to rest at last in tolerable comfort. After a conference with Mr. Look, it was decided that I should be taken back to Roebourne if I gained strength to enable me to start, travelling as much as possible in the night to avoid the distressing heat of the sun. Mr. Look undertook to find the buggy and horses, and to drive himself. As a further precaution, a young horseman named Ashton was engaged as an orderly, so that in case of emergency a doctor could be sent for. Mr. Graham Hill returned with me to the coast. Mr. Look's black boy was also to go as servant and tracker. The remainder of the party were to complete the tour.

OUR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

We made some attempt at cheeriness over our Christmas dinner, at which Mr. Osborne's

LOOK'S BOY.

turkey made a noble dish—brown, crisp, luscious, and done to a turn. It was one of the largest birds that had ever fallen to a sportsman's gun on the plains of the North-West. A bottle of champagne was opened in honour of the day, but, after all, there was a kind of pall over the feast. It "was the parting of the ways," and the knowledge had a depressing influence upon our party. Of minor troubles Mr. Osborne had had a full share. On arriving at Woodstock, he was sorely tried on discovering there, among the holiday makers, the man who had been despatched at an early date to leave our relays of horses at the various stations. He had started from Roebourne in plenty of time to give the teams a rest in the paddock before they were called upon to do their share of the arduous task of taking us through to Talga Talga. With his usual foresight and generalship, Mr. Osborne had marked out a programme for the drover, by adhering to which the horses could have done their long journey from the coast by easy stages, and been as fresh as paint for us when we arrived, but the whole of the well-concerted plan was broken up by the fondness of the drover for his glass, and the attractions of the Woodstock Hotel. The man, it transpired, had rushed his cattle on to get to Woodstock without giving them time to feed, and had ridden two or three of them, which were especially good in the saddle, to skin and bone. On getting to the hotel he had left the horses to take care of themselves, had lost two of them, and the remainder were in a very sorry plight. Worse than all, they were 50 miles short of where they should have been quietly resting in order to be fit and well for our journey. The missing horses were, however, soon recovered by Mr. Look's black boy, and a feed of corn was given to the weak and weary relays, whose ill-usage told severely on the progress of the rest of the party, and well nigh made them miss the mail steamer.

OFF TO THE "MOB."

AN EASY SHOT.

Chapter 23.

Back to the Coast.

By Graham Hill.

A LETTER FROM HOME.

EVERY guest assembled at Woodstock station turned up to see our friends depart, and the cheers were mingled with hiccoughs as the cavalcade rolled off. The men were reluctant to leave the shade of the humpy, and they hung about Calvert's stretcher for some time before we could induce them to return to the "hotel." Meanwhile the patient turned over and over, and muttered in delirium, and William Look, with a set, anxious face, re-soaked the towels in the pail of water, and applied them to the burning head and hands. "Go with 'em', and keep 'em in order!" Look whispered to me; "keep 'em out of earshot for God's sake, or this man's got to die!" It was a tall order, for, in addition to the fact that scarcely half-a-dozen men in the whole crowd were amenable to reason, they were so genuinely sorry to find Calvert sick, that they were determined to stay with him and cheer him up a bit. Look was in despair. "See here, boys," he called out, "it's that chap's birthday, and he's wishful for you all to have a drink with him!" I took the hint, and started running down the slope towards the house. The whole "push" followed, and in a few moments the humpy was cleared of its uninvited callers.

TWO OF A KIND.

The "hotel," which was built of stone, consisted of one large flag-paved room, divided into two apartments by a hessian partition. On one side of the partition the liquor was stored—on the other side it was consumed by the thirty-four "born-drunks," who had foregathered from the outlying mining claims to spend Christmas in congenial society. A rickety wooden table and half-a-dozen empty whiskey cases, formed the whole of the furniture, and the wall was decorated with the charcoal inscription, "May the Lord

stiffen the Publican!" Several of the guests had been there a few days, others had only just arrived, while one little red-headed digger, affectionately styled "Tommy," had been boarding there for nearly three weeks. His premature appearance on the festive scene had been caused by an error of calculation. "Tommy" had "gone wide" in his own camp about the beginning of the month, and the boys had persuaded him that it was Christmas Eve. He was missing from his blanket on the following morning, and towards sundown he arrived at the local hostelry, where he put up his "stuff," amounting to several ounces of coarse gold, and demanded to be supplied with its equivalent in liquor.

KILLING.

"Gentlemen," said "Tommy," solemnly, as I was ushered into the room, "we will now call upon 'Ginger' to oblige us with a dance, after which the 'Dook' will insist on our having a wine with him."

The little villain had participated in several scrapping matches during his residence at the Woodstock Hotel, and his entire costume was reduced to a pair of dirty moleskin breeches, a flannel shirt, which he wore outside his trousers, and a ragged pack of cards, that he kept handy on the chance of somebody wanting a little friendly game.

There were loud calls for "Ginger," another red-headed man, who protested in vain that he was "used up." He was given some liquor to put "powder" into him, and then three or four pairs of arms tossed him lightly on to the table. An asthmatic flute commenced to gasp the ghost of the air of an Irish jig, and the red-headed man danced with a terrific clatter of his hob-nailed boots, finishing with a breakdown that threatened to smash the table, and roused the company to enthusiasm.

During the course of this entertainment, three more guests arrived. One of them led a tired-looking horse, another carried a handsome Winchester rifle, and the third was the proprietor of a saddle and bridle. They had no money, but an arrangement was speedily effected, by which Look's factotum became the owner of the strangers' effects, and the strangers were credited with fifteen pounds' worth of liquor. This transaction having been satisfactorily completed, "Ginger" found an opportunity of forcing a fight on "Tommy," who, next to drinking, regarded fighting as the leading seasonable luxury. We adjourned to the shady

NOON

side of the house, and after two feeble rounds, "Tommy" returned with his full complement of self-esteem, and rather less of his flannel shirt.

The fight finished, the manager produced the bottle. The drinking utensils were varied in shape, size, and design. Tin cups predominated, but cracked china was also in evidence, and a dissension was caused by "Tommy," who produced an empty two-pound fruit-tin, and insisted upon pouring out his own libation. After this, the latest arrivals reduced the amount of liquor standing to their credit, by "shouting" three rounds in quick succession.

"ON HIS OWN."

The evening meal was an atrocity, that I do not care to recall to memory. The old cook—a white man—and the two gins, who acted as his assistants, had been drunk all day, with the result that half the skinny chops were burnt black, and the rest were raw. The onions and tinned potatoes from Singapore, had not been as much as scraped. Luckily for the cook, nobody troubled about the food while the liquor held out, and within a few minutes of the arrival of the dishes they were cleared away, and we fell a-drinking again. As a round consisted of thirty-five drinks at a shilling apiece, and as I was expected to shout every other round, my efforts during the course of the evening added considerably to the cost of the trip. Every now and then I managed to get away and bolt up to the humpy, to see how the patient was progressing. It was no easy task to escape from the festivities, for my entertainers harboured suspicions that I should not return from these excursions to provide them with more drink, so two or three men attached themselves to my person with the intention of ensuring my safe return. Several times during that long evening a shout would arise of "Let's go and cheer up the Boss!" and then I had to have recourse to the bottle again, to divert their attentions. The improvised concert that occupied the evening, was diversified by several fights, in one of which I was an unwilling participator, and but for the knowledge possessed by the crowd that a dead man stands no drinks, that altercation would have ended badly for me. But the singing and fighting, and even the drinking, ended at last, and at a late hour the crowd composed itself to rest around the house.

GRACE BEFORE TUCKER.

Next morning Calvert was so far recovered that

Look declared we would be able to start at sundown, provided always that the patient could be kept quiet and did not have a relapse. There was a fair sprinkling of black eyes, but very few bright ones among the boys, who came up to inquire after the "Boss," but Look, who had instituted himself physician, general attendant, and head nurse to Calvert, and had left his business to run itself in the meantime, hustled them away from the humpy, and I, as chief herdman of this desirable flock, returned with them.

In and out of the hotel there were motley scenes, and sharp contrasts among the various types of men, who had congregated to enjoy the Christmas holidays. The North-West is the gathering ground of adventurous spirits, who do not like the restraining influences of more civilised life, or who indulge in the hope of making a "big haul" on the Pilbarra Goldfields, where every one, short of committing felony or murder, can be a law unto himself. The groups were of different nationalities, and of all ages, from twenty-five to sixty, but all alike in the red Indian hue of their bronzed, tanned skins. Among them were some who, from the nautical lurch in their walk, had evidently been sailors; there were grizzled prospectors who had spent a long, hard life without unearthing a prize, and hardy bushmen who could ride the roughest horse, yoke up a savage bullock, or drive a waggon overland from Queensland—men who knew as little of town life as the black boys who were hanging round until their masters should have finished their carouse. The Bacchanals were quaffing all day long, throwing the dice for nobblers at a shilling a time, shouting, so that each man could be heard by his neighbour above the din, but their liquor, at a guinea per bottle for whiskey, did not hurt them overmuch, for they broke the seals themselves, and there was no adulteration. The tipple was too good for them to quarrel over frequently: it only made them maudlin in effusive displays of friendship. The glasses were no sooner empty than they were filled again, but the men of the North-West, like their horses, are capable of great

A NATIVE TRACKER.

endurance; the fittest survive in that Vestibule of Hell, while the weaklings depart, or quickly die. There was one exception, as conspicuous in that uncouth mob as if he were an albino—a man of refined features, sitting apart from the revellers on a bag of chaff in a corner of the verandah, pensively reading an ancient copy of *The Review of Reviews*, which he held between thin, blistered fingers. He was a new arrival, and posed as a miner, but it was a hard part for him to play, a great change of life for him to be delving for four hours at a time in the drive. What his old life was no one knew; no one cared—for he was not disposed to be "Hail fellow, well met" among his new associates, and I found it impossible to draw him out. His eye was on the page, but to judge from his abstracted air, his thoughts—and they do not appear to be pleasant ones—were far away. It would have been easy to make some interesting guesses about his history, of what brought him from a profession to "hard graft," which he was unfit to do. A modern prodigal son, maybe, an ill-starred love affair, perhaps a breach of trust, or love of gambling. But, musing apart, it was certain that he was one of Rudyard Kipling's "gentleman rankers," who could say all too sorrowfully:—

SHAKESPEARE.

"We have done with hope and honour, we are lost to love and truth,
We are dropping down the ladder, rung by rung,
And the measure of our torment is the measure of our youth;
God help us, for we knew the worst too young.
Our shame is clean repentance for the crime that brought the sentence;
Our pride it is to know no spur of pride,
And the curse of Reuben holds us, till an alien turf unfolds us,
And we die, and none can tell them where we died."

Sauntering round the hotel, I saw that we were getting farther and farther away from civilization, for the black children wore no clothes, which had been gradually disappearing. At Cossack and Roebourne the blacks were as decently clothed as Europeans. The Sherlock saw them in attire that could not bring a blush to a maiden's cheek, although the dresses were not *a la mode*, but at Woodstock, girls, as well as boys, ran about without even a fig-leaf, or its Australian equivalent, an apron of paper bark. The little studies of the nude were as innocent as Eve before the fall, and had no idea that they looked strange in the eyes of visitors; they blithely toddled about after their mothers—sleek young lubras, servants of the hotel—naked, but not ashamed. If these comely gins had been running wild with the tribe, they would have been ugly harridans, brutally ill-treated, creatures of burden instead of shining

A CHRISTMAS INCIDENT.

with health and good feeding, producing robust offspring. But there was one woeful sight among the children, a ruthful exception to the sturdy little imps, who, nearly as round as dumplings, were running about in every direction. Under the eve of the kitchen, lying on the ground, with no softer couch than the sunburnt turf, was what would have been a half-caste child if it had not been far more like a living corpse. The eyes of the pitiful mite were wide open and staring at the sky with a shrinking expression of pain, in which there was a weird suggestion of age, as though the wee thing, apparently only a few months old, had gone through three-score years, or an eternity of suffering. The little bones were so destitute of flesh that every rib was as plainly outlined as if it had been pared clean by the dissecting knife of a surgeon; the knee caps, the shoulder joints, were nodules of bone, nothing but bone. The child was so fragile that I was afraid to lift it lest it fell to pieces in my grasp. And all the while, in the burning sun, the teeth champed convulsively, the lips opened and shut with gasps of pain, and the skin was neither black, nor brown, nor yellow, but livid with a leaden, purple hue, as though the work of putrefaction had already begun in what, but for a faint spark of life, should have been consigned to mother earth, thankful that the tortured life was at last at rest. While I was compassionately looking upon this spectre babe, which had not strength enough to give vent to its anguish with a cry, the mother came out of the kitchen, cast a reproachful glance at me, took up her dying child tenderly in her arms, and pressed it gently to her breast. Nothing could have been more affecting: it brought a choking to the throat, and a desire to be alone so that no one could see the mist that gathered in the eyes. That puny creature had never known a moment's health since its birth, and Look told me that, although it was two years old, it did not weigh five pounds. For two years it had been dying, but the watchful care of the devoted mother had, with mistaken kindness, just kept the feeble spark of life from going out. If she had neglected it for only a few hours it would have died, but she would leave her work, stay awake at night, or stir at its slightest moan to give it the one or two drops of nourishment which, taken very often, was sufficient to keep it from the grave and a merciful release.

SEARCHING FOR A "COLOUR"

It seemed to us that day that the sun would never set, but late in the afternoon, Bobby, Look's black boy, came to announce that the horses were in the buggy, and to ask what

we would want for the journey. The revellers applauded mightily when we appeared half supporting, half carrying Calvert to the house, and the cheers were again mingled with shouts and hiccoughs, for the drink was running short at Woodstock, and each man had been trying to get his full share before the last bottle was emptied. While Look was hunting around in the house, in the hope of finding some provision, the more energetic spirits commenced unharnessing the horses. Bob fought valiantly to keep off the intruders, and Look, hurrying out, saw that we must make a dash for it. Leaping into the seat, he snatched up the reins, calling on Calvert and myself to follow. He might have saved himself the trouble, for the next moment we were seized by capable hands, and flung bodily into the buggy. A few lusty slashes with the whip—and a kick in the face to a man who had repented already his share in helping us into the vehicle, and was trying to get us out again—and our horses leapt off at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, towards the coast.

When we left Woodstock station we had no spare horses, but Ted Ashton, who was to overtake us at Look's Pool that night, was to bring two more saddle horses, and for our changes we depended upon picking up on the road such animals as we could get the loan of. Bob, with commendable foresight, had stowed a large loaf of bread, half a knuckle of ham, a bottle of pickles, and some tea and sugar into a sack, and except for this we had no stores nearer than Pilbarra, which was seventy miles away. We started off hopefully enough, however, and trusted to our ability to push through quickly; but it was soon evident that if we wished to get Calvert back to Roebourne alive, we should have to travel slowly, and principally at night. He was thoroughly exhausted before we had got two miles from Woodstock, and when we reached Look's Pool he was done up, and had to be lifted out of the buggy. We had only one rug apiece, and no cushions, so we gave him the provision sack for a pillow, and a nip of raw whiskey for a nightcap. If we had been better acquainted with sunstroke, we should have acted with more discretion in the matter of the whiskey bottle, but as it was, we administered it on every sign of failing strength and exhaustion. Of course, when we discovered our mistake, we had the consolation of knowing that if we hadn't given the patient whiskey, he would have had nothing, but Mr. Meares whistled when I explained to him our course of treatment: and on our return to Roebourne, Dr. Hicks, who spotted the mistake before we told him of it, used a quantity of language that he could not have employed before the Committee of the

"HOLD ON, JINKS; HERE'S A PARCEL FOR LONDON!"

Royal College of Physicians. However, he reached the coast alive in spite of our mistaken attentions, although Dr. Hicks said, by way of peroration, that if he had been a rational man, he would have died two days out of Woodstock, and got shot of the lot of us.

When we had made Calvert as comfortable as our means permitted, we withdrew a little way so as to allow him to sleep undisturbed, taking the whiskey bottle with us. Then we made the terrible discovery that, in the rush of our departure, both Look and I had left our pipes behind us. We waited in fear and trembling for the arrival of Ashton, who rode up soon after 10 o'clock, and saluted us with, "Can either of you chaps lend me a spare pipe? I dropped mine coming along, and it was too dark to attempt to find it!" I gasped at the awfulness of the news, and Look, in dismay, groaned "Oh, Lord!" There was a stillness for many seconds before Look rose, and said solemnly, "I'll go, buy Bob's tube!" But Bob refused to sell, although he did not object to lending it to us if we supplied tobacco for the party. As no better terms could be got we closed with it, and for three days and nights Look, Ashton, and I, shared the pipe with the nigger boy. When we reached Pilbarra we marched in a body to Tom Newland's store, and invested in three pipes each. We had made up our minds not to repeat the experience, if human forethought could prevent it.

"COO-EE."

The stars were twinkling in an indigo blue sky when we rolled out of our blankets between three and four o'clock in the morning, and commenced our preparations for an early start. Bob's pipe passed from mouth to mouth as we watered and harnessed up the horses, and as we had omitted to bring any drinking vessels with us, we had to postpone breakfast until we had collected upon our road a sufficient number of empty tins to go round.

Probably no man was ever more glad to get away from Look's Pool and its surroundings than I was, for although Calvert still remained dangerously ill, we were, at least, on the way to medical help, and I began to see a chance of getting him back to England alive. For the past few days I had been wondering whether, in the event of his death, I had better wire the bad news to England, or suppress the fact until I reached home, and when a man gets into that state of mind even whiskey fails to comfort him.

We hadn't left the Pool an hour behind us when Calvert collapsed again, and we had eighteen miles to go for water. The drive was done in silence. Occasionally Look loosed off a few oaths when a horse failed to go up to his collar, and the rest echoed the sentiment under our breaths. We all kept a roving eye for likely tins, and when Bob

slipped off the back of the buggy, or Ashton brought up his horse with a round turn, we knew that another drinking utensil was added to the store. When we reached the Government Wells at mid-day, five two-pound meat-tins of various shapes were solemnly washed out, filled with water, and placed upon the fire. We had no "billy" in which to prepare the general brew, so each one boiled his own pot independently of the others. It saved a lot of altercation as to who should have the last cup.

It was just before we reached this stage of our travels on the journey up, that the material for illustrating this portion of the tour came very near being altogether lost in the desert. Hodgson had placed his portfolio—nothing more elegant than an old nosebag—in the foremost buggy, but was himself riding with Ginx in the second. Frequently the vehicles were some distance apart—a mile or more—and it was while so travelling that the artist sighted the nosebag, which had fallen on the track of the first drag. This was Hodgson's most important "find" in the goldfields, but he was perfectly satisfied with it. After this occurrence he made it his footstool by day and his pillow by night.

"GOT 'IM!"

The water at the Government Well called aloud for boiling—indeed it was so bad that the horses refused to approach it until late in the afternoon, when their parched throats could hold out no longer. The stench nearly drove us away from the spot, but the shade that was thrown by the built-up bank had great attractions. We rigged up a fly-sheet with a couple of old sacks, and laid ourselves down to wait for evening. It was too hot to sleep or to talk, and only Bob had stomach left for the ham-bone. We brewed quarts of tea in our meat-tins, and swore gently as each breath of blistering hot wind swept over us. It would be impossible to describe the discomfort of those hot winds. They were unbearable even to the hands; they skinned our nostrils and our lips, and dried up the corners of our eyes until it pained us to close our lids. The sand was so hot that we kept in one position until our limbs were cramped, and ached as with toothache.

We covered only ten miles that evening, but it was eleven o'clock before we reached Wadgina, where we found Reginald Hester and a herd of cattle on their way to the coast. Mr. Hester had a look at our patient—and a very gloomy look it was. "What have you been giving him?" he asked. "Whiskey, until it ran out." "Not tried rum?" "No." "Well, that's all I've got, so you'd better try it." So we tried rum, first on the patient, and then on ourselves. Suddenly Mr. Hester remembered that among the truck in his blanket

he had got stowed away a bottle of Dr. Davis's Pain Killer. We leapt at the news, and as Calvert had no objection to the new treatment, we dosed him with Pain Killer. This is not an advertisement for a patent medicine, but as sure as we were tired men, the effect was magical. The head and internal pains seemed to leave him, and he fell asleep. Fifteen seconds later the rest of the camp were snoring in unison.

In the morning our bodies were covered with black ants as with a pall. They were quite harmless, but the incessant itching they created was beyond endurance. We stripped to our skin before the sun got up, and shook our clothes with the vigour of lunatics until the air was full of black ants and bad language. For breakfast we had more rum. Mr. Hester was as destitute of tucker as ourselves, and Pilbarra and a square meal was twenty miles distant.

JOLLY!

At Yandiarra, Calvert's condition demanded another break in the journey. We were all dead beat, and our patient had suddenly experienced a craving for tinned pineapple that would not be satisfied with pickled onions, and water procured from the bed of the river. Then Ted Ashton did a deed that should have gained for him the Victoria Cross. He volunteered to ride into Pilbarra and back—a distance of sixteen miles—and bring us provisions. We nearly cheered! Some hours later he returned with a bottle of red wine and one of whiskey, a tin of pineapple and some tobacco and cigarette papers. Then we solemnly blessed him, and vowed that his children's children should never die of want while we had a shilling to contribute to their support. He accepted our praises and promises —together with his share of the whiskey and tobacco—with noble modesty, and Bobby eyed the pineapple as though he would willingly have suffered sunstroke for the privilege of licking out the tin.

It was late when we reached Pilbarra, but what a welcome was awaiting us. Messrs. Walsh and Laffer had ridden over the Broken Ridge to meet us, and Mr. Brown was putting the finishing touches to the table when we arrived. A stretcher had been got ready for Calvert, who was only too thankful to rest his weary limbs after the jolting of the buggy. Look, Ashton and I made our way down to the site of the battery that is erected on Pilbarra Creek. There we stripped, and with the assistance of an elevated cistern, and half-a-dozen yards of rubber tubing, we treated one another to an excellent sloosh bath. We had learnt of this luxury on the way up. The moon threw a bluish-white light on the spot as we stood dripping wet, waiting our turn with the towel, and our bodies shone like the bodies of lepers, only ours were not so white.

Supper followed—the first square meal we had eaten for four days! That supper was the record meal of my life.

After supper Tom Newland came over from the Pilbarra Hotel, and he was a ministering angel to us. As soon as he had ascertained the condition of affairs he went away, returning presently with a long bamboo chair, some cushions, and a bottle of champagne. With the help of these we got our patient comfortably fixed for the night. From that time till the following evening Newland constituted himself cook to the hospital department. In the morning he sent over a boiled chicken, with greens from his own patch of garden; he produced a custard made with eggs from his own fowl-house, and milk from his own cow, and a bottle of port on which new dust took the place of ancient crust. Nobody could have received more kindness than was shown us at Pilbarra, and I am confident that it was solely due to the break we made there that we brought Calvert safely back to Roebourne.

A MINER'S DREAM OF HOME.

We camped at Egina the following night, and although Calvert was for pushing on till sun-up, wiser counsels prevailed. The horses were daily weakening from insufficient food, and although we had borrowed some fresh animals at Pilbarra, we still had the stale cattle with us. At Mallina we might get some compressed fodder, but we might not, and we were still many miles from the Sherlock Station, where a supply of this commodity was awaiting us. Calvert continued to rally, and the next morning's stage to Millindinna was accomplished with less difficulty, but the monotony of the journey became very trying. Each day was but a repetition of the last—up before moon-set, travel till noon; several hours of inaction through the hottest period of the day, and then another long stage far into the night. To us who had our health, and could ride or walk by turns, and find relief in the work entailed by the horses and the business of shifting our camp, the sameness was irksome to a degree; but to Calvert, lying sick

and comfortless on the boards of the buggy, and having to be lifted in and out of it when we stopped and started, the journey must have been a few shades worse than Purgatory.

The fourteen miles from Millindinna to Mallina seemed the longest stage of all. The horses were fairly buckled up, and required all the persuasion of whip and spur to get them out of a walk. The shifting moonlight exaggerated the height of the withered trees, and the depths of the empty creeks and gullies; the cry of the mopehawk set up a jumpy sensation in our nerves, and when on two occasions Look pointed out the little wooden cross that marked the last resting-place of an unfortunate pioneer, the escort closed in around the buggy and demanded drink. One incident of that night's stage lives in my memory. At the last well before Mallina was reached we stopped to water the horses. The high wooden palisade around the well was black, and I thought it had been painted to prevent decay, but as I climbed the lower rails and threw my leg over the top bar, the paint peeled off as if by magic. The black veneer was composed of a solid mass of cockroaches, who scuttled into hiding when disturbed. The feel of the beastly things under my hands and quarters, and the sound of their myriad feet scampering over the wood nearly caused me to yell out and topple off my perch. It took me the space of several long breaths before I could jump down inside the rails and get to work on the windlass.

A MALLINA BELLE.

The Mallina Hotel was in darkness when we arrived, but we soon hunted up Mr. Glyn, who led the way to the bar. It may sound like a fairy tale, but it is none the less true, that in the water-boat we discovered two bottles of champagne. How they came to be put there, or why they had been left there, I cannot say, but we speedily loosened the corks, and I am prepared to swear that they contained the best wine I ever drank. It is somewhat humiliating that my most vivid recollections of the North-West are of a square meal, a tall drink, and a black boy's pipe, but I humbly confess that these three items fill the completest part in my memory. Before we turned in at two o'clock in the morning we learned from Mr. Glyn that Mr. Withnell had been there

during the previous day, and had brought very bad news of little Leonard, whom we now heard for the first time was suffering from typhoid fever. We had intended, for the sake of the horses as well as our own, to spend the following day at Mallina, but this sad intelligence caused us to alter our arrangements, and three hours later we were again on the road.

We had borrowed a couple of fairly fresh horses at Mallina, leaving our worst pair in their place, and with these we covered the ground in tolerable style. Two bush belles, whom our artist had sketched on the way up, were hanging around the Mallina Hotel in the morning to see us depart, and as they so faithfully illustrate Mr. Brunton Stephens' lines, "To a Black Gin," I make no apology for introducing them here:—

Thou art not beautiful, I tell thee plainly,
Oh! thou ungainliest of things ungainly;
Who thinks thee less than hideous dotes insanely.

Yet thou my sister art, the clergy tell me;
Though, truth to state, thy brutish looks compel me
To hope these parsons merely want to *sell* me.

Eve's daughter! with that skull and that complexion?
What principle of "Natural Selection"
Gave thee with Eve the most remote connection?

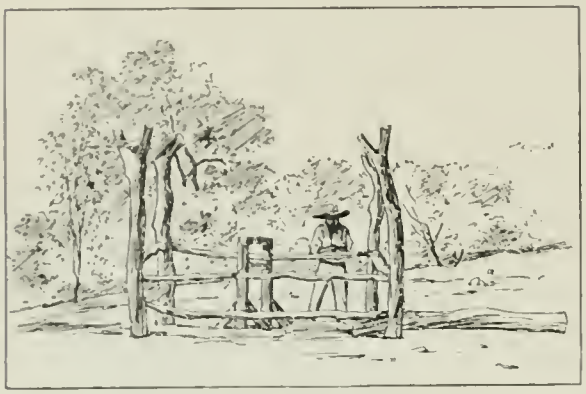
Sister of L. E. L——, of Mrs. Stowe, too!
Of E. B. Browning! Harriet Martineau, too!
Do theologians know where fibbers go to?

Of dear George Eliot, whom I worship daily!
Of Charlotte Brontë! and Joanna Baillie!—
Methinks that theory is rather "scaly."

ANOTHER.

We made a real discovery before we reached Whim Creek, or rather I may claim that I alone made the discovery, and should have the whole credit for it. The timber of the North-West is for the most part of a weak and unresisting nature, which renders it dangerous to lean against, or to tie a sheep to. I would have contended that there was not a tree between Mallina and Whim Creek that I could not have knocked down with a heavy blow, but I discovered one stubborn customer that was proof against this treatment. We had been cantering leisurely along, driving the spare horses before us, and one old screw finding himself unnoticed, had strayed away in a northerly direction. I caught sight of him as he was disappearing into a little clump of bushes on the extreme right, and wheeling round and digging in my heels, I galloped off after him. But although I started first in pursuit, it was Bobby who captured the straggler, for a bough of a tree, which I was not quick enough to avoid, caught me smartly under the chin, and scraped me out of the saddle. It was full daylight at the time, and nobody else noticed anything wrong with the firmament, but I saw more stars in the next thirty seconds than an ordinary intoxicated man could see on the most brilliant Australian night.

At Brown's Mount, where we had delighted the heart of the old shepherd and his wife with a gift of tobacco on the way up, we had to leave one of our horses—he was too far gone to crawl. All that afternoon we pressed on, until even Bobbie looked as if he had had enough of it. The perspiration flowed off us in streams, and the horses were in a bath of lather. Every mile or so we had to call a halt and change them, giving each in turn a spell in the shafts. We crossed the sandy bed of the Little Sherlock with difficulty, but at the Great Sherlock our hearts nearly misgave us. We had a rest on the bank, and then all walking and leading the horses, we staggered foot by foot through the deep holding sand to the opposite bank. I don't know how wide that sham river is, but it seemed to us about forty miles across. At every pace the sand grew deeper; the horses, with bloodshot eyes and quivering flanks, breathed in short gusts, and made the only sound that broke the silence. The big, red sun was perched on the horizon, and a wraith of a moon rose on the other side of the scene, and wooden-looking crickets, about as large as tobacco pouches, flew to and fro across our path. Sometimes they flew into our faces, and the blow stung like the lash of a whip.



THE WELL ON THE ROAD TO MALLINA.

On the far side of the Great Sherlock, our troubles culminated. The bank rises steeply but of a bed of sand, and there we stuck. The horses strained until they were ready to drop, but the wheels refused to move, and the metal shoes kicked sparks out of the dust, as they slipped on the bank. Then, dog tired, and strained to breaking pitch, the horses refused to struggle. Bill Look, who had been coaxing them with all the endearing phrases he could remember, then adopted different tactics. "Swish, swish," screamed the heavy whip; "bang, bang," came the deep chested oaths, for Look had lost all patience. Ashton and I went to the horses' heads and pulled, Bobbie sweated at the near hind wheel, while Look stood on the off side with a two-handed grasp of the whip, and rained down a profusion of cuts and oaths, such

CHILDLIKE AND BLAND.

as I have never known to be equalled in point and vehemence. Under this treatment the horses renewed their efforts, and by slow and tortuous stages, the buggy creaked, jolted, lurched forward, and finally reached the brow of the bank. During the whole of this operation, Look's eloquence continued, and Bobby, from the hind wheel, looked up in open-eyed admiration of his master's prowess. Bobby's experience of swear words was as extensive, if not as varied as my own, and I confidently assert that I have never listened to anything that approached Look's effort. When at length the buggy was safely landed on level ground, Look's anger disappeared, and he groomed down the horses in a rough and ready fashion with a sack.

PADEREWSKI.

A smell of stale smoke that follows a fire assailed us as we neared Sherlock Station, and made us apprehensive lest the homestead had been burnt down since our last visit. Urging the horses forward at a brisker pace, we were relieved when a turn in the track brought the house to view, but some hundred yards away we saw the burnt-out carcase of the harness house, in which the whole of our compressed fodder had been stored. The evidence of our eyes was soon afterwards confirmed by Mr. Mears himself, who told us that the fire had taken place on the previous evening, and that not a single pound of feed had been spared. We glanced miserably from our worn-out animals—not one of which was worth a crown a leg, unless a square meal could be put into them—to Mr. Mears, and that most hospitable of Scotchmen was equal to the occasion. He offered to harness a pair of his cracks in the morning, and rattle us into Roebourne as quickly as possible. It was at Sherlock Station that Calvert obtained the first medicine since his seizure. After a bowl of milk and a cooling potion he got a comfortable night's rest.

News of Leonard's condition was far from reassuring. Mr. Mears had seen Dr. Hicks the day before, and learned that the lad was seriously ill. He would not be out of danger for several days. As soon as it was light a stock rider was despatched to the further paddock to catch and bring back the promised horses, and shortly afterwards we set out on our last stage. We left Bobbie at the Sherlock to follow on as soon as one of the horses was sufficiently recovered to carry him, and Ashton and I mounted on the back of the buggy. The run in was uneventful, and at midday we were standing in the verandah of Mr. Roe's house, listening to the Doctor's story of Leonard's illness.

Leonard was, indeed, in a critical condition, and he was watched day and night by Mr. Roe, Dr. Hicks, the doctor's man from the hospital, and a female nurse. The little chap recognised his brother at intervals, but only for brief moments before relapsing into unconsciousness. It was pitiful to watch Calvert's agony as he realized his own inability to relieve the lad's sufferings, and it made the situation doubly hard when Dr. Hicks declared that he must return south immediately, and get eastward or westward out of the Colony with all speed. There was no appeal against the decision. "If you stay here, you'll die, as sure as the devil's in Roebourne," he said; adding, "You will probably die as it is, but you needn't stay here to do it!"

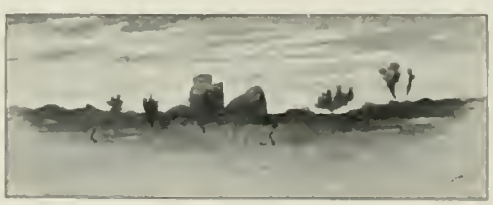
All that night we listened to the moans from the sick room, and heard the doctor's

ON THE SHERLOCK STATION.

footsteps as he passed to and from his house opposite. In the morning Leonard was better —so far as a typhoid patient could be better before the crucial stage was passed—and at eight o'clock the following day we were on board the *Sultan*, steaming southward. One week later (January 11th, 1896), at Albany, at eight o'clock in the morning, we received telegrams from Mr. Roe and Dr. Hicks, bringing us the sad news that the soul of Leonard Calvert had gone—

> "To the island-valley of Avilion;
> Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly."

During the following three weeks Calvert and I visited Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, and on February 3rd we touched again at Albany to pick up the rest of our party, and re-embark on our homeward voyage.



"THE SUN HAS SET, AND YET IT IS NOT NIGHT."

Chapter 24.

Into the Mountainous Districts—An Abandoned Load—Arrival at Tambourah Creek—"A Well-watered Country"—Vide Government Reports—At Western Shaw—Mr. George Withnell's Hospitality—The Native Labour Conditions.

By S. H. Whittaker.

AT four o'clock we had to take leave of Mr. Calvert and Mr. Graham Hill, in order that we might make Tambourah Creek that night. Mr. Calvert, whose rest had slightly revived him, was able to give some instructions to Mr. Brenton Symons, mining engineer and geologist, in order that the best might be done in the absence of our leader, whom, with many expressions of regret, we then left lying on his couch under the branches. Mr. Calvert sat up to wave us "farewell," and Mr. Hill stood in the middle of the track, and watched us with a wistful gaze until a bend in the road hid him from view. The road from Woodstock to the Creek traverses very hilly country. It follows a valley wherever one is to be found, but more often the horses were climbing at a snail's pace or hanging back on their haunches with the breast hard down on precipitous descents that none but a Colonial driver would attempt, while the passengers held on, with their feet jammed against the foot-board and hands clutching the backs of the seats. Some of the cliffs we passed were very majestic and grotesque freaks of nature. In one place there is an exact imitation, carved in granite half a mile long, of the back and flanks of a camel. The hump and the hind-quarters are depicted in graphic and gigantic portraiture. A few miles further on there has been piled up by some tremendous volcanic convulsion, as strange an example of equilibrium as the celebrated Leaning Tower of Pisa. Three boulders, each about twice as large as one of the boilers of an ocean-going steamer, are raised, one on the other, something in the form of a gigantic cross or "see-saw," the plank of which is delicately balanced by an equal weight at either end. The first coachman who drove past the impending avalanche, gave the crazy-

A NIGHT CAMP.

seated stones a wide berth, and everyone else does the same; but as they have been standing for ages they may last a little longer—say as long as the Pyramids of Egypt.

A man has to travel in the North-West to find out that a gold-spurred driver and his native horses will take wheels and loading anywhere. The great gorge, ten miles out of Woodstock, is almost enough to stop a pack-horse, yet the tracks show that a waggon has got through somehow, skidding and crashing up against boulders which were luckily in the way to check the gathering speed: the horses slipping, rolling, now nearly on their noses, now thrown back with a sudden jerk, as the waggon, plunging recklessly across an eight-feet gully, strikes the opposite bank and is pulled up standing. Well, where a team has gone a coach can follow: the passengers get out and the brakes are tied down, and then we make a fresh start, expecting every moment to see the waggon stuck in a *cul de sac*, or broken up in front, as each new turn opens to the view. Mr. Osborne, who has been "at the game"

"THE SISTERS," TALGA TALGA. (Drawn from the top of Granite Rocks).

himself, says that the waggon passed out of the other side of the range all right, but it confounds the judgment to think so. We follow the wheel marks with a sharpened zest. There they diverge to avoid a fallen tree, here to skim the side of a yawning chasm, or to miss a pinch where the team would have had to climb like a cat going up a topmost bough. Some of the load was taken off, for the ground is scarred and trampled, and still the wheels crept along the crabbed pass that an engineer would have left the crows and vultures to cross. To drive a freight team to a new rush in the North-West, a man must be something of a Salamander, a Conde and a Luxemberg rolled into one. Stay! Just as we are exchanging notes of admiration about the dauntless driver, we see in the distance a waggon, horseless, deserted, left on a little flat in a valley beyond the mountains. After all, it looks as if the iron-hearted pilot has found his courage fail him almost in sight of his destination. The hundreds of miles of "road," upon which not a penny has been spent, nor a pick lifted to improve, have worn him down at last. No; the loading is too valuable to have been deserted; he must have gone in search of water; there is no well about here. No well within twenty miles; no water for those wretched horses after their terrible grapple with the

forces of Nature, with a heavy load behind them. Sweating, straining, nearly pulling their hearts out to get the waggon over the range, the wretched animals emerge from the struggle to be taken out and driven by their overtasked driver many miles to the nearest well. He has to start before the last rays of daylight have faded and left him belated in the desert, without even staying to boil his "billy," or to snatch a hasty meal. So much for the water conservation of the Government. We were to have some experience of these things ourselves before the night was over.

AT DEAD BULLOCK CREEK, NOR'-WEST.

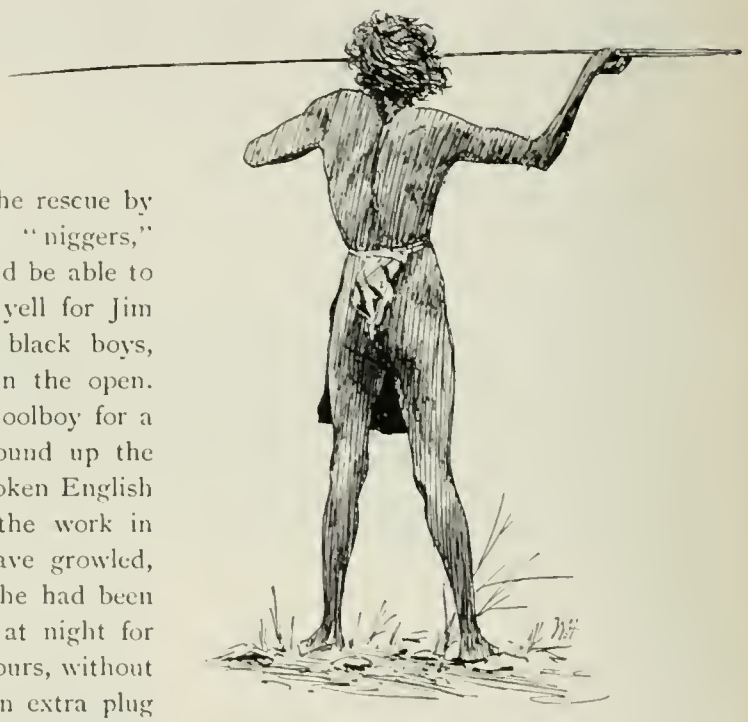
We entered Tambourah Creek under the light of the stars. An electric light like that of the South Head, Port Jackson, would not be out of place at the mouth of such a devil's trap. The Creek is at the bottom of a rocky, ragged, tumbled heap of crags and crevasses. It is what even a North-West man calls "rough," which, in ordinary English, means as wry and shaggy a piece of country as ever threatened the neck of a chamois. Tambourah Creek is the Koord Cabul Pass of Western Australia. The gold that has tempted men to go there, was very recently discovered by a party of prospectors, who named their find the "World's Fair." The world must have treated them very hardly, to make them go and look for fortune in such a pit of perdition:—

How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles.

THE WESTERN SHAW.

Far down in the bed of the Creek to which we were descending, with the swaying pole menacing the horses with a lofty tumble, we could see a few dull lights, and after scrambling and jolting our way deviously down the lowest peak of the mountain, we heard voices and a number of men came forward with hearty greetings. "Come and have some tea." "What about the horses?" "There's no water here; they'll have to go to the well eight miles

away!" This was anything but cheerful news, but there was no help for it. A well was being sunk at the Creek, but water had not been struck. There was a little drop in some of the rock holes, but even if our hosts had stretched the laws of hospitality by offering it to us and going short themselves, the precious store would not have been more than a quart apiece for all the horses we had brought along from the drunken drover at Woodstock. It was a nice prospect for Mr. Osborne's nephew to be scouring such a country all night with a thirsty mob of horses, looking for water, which ought to have been provided on the road, if the Public Works Department did its duty. The lad had had a hard time in the saddle, managing single handed nearly thirty horses in unfenced country, and just as he wanted a cup of tea and a blanket, he had to go careering about the rocky steeps with a lot of roadsters, which might break away from him at any moment in the dark. The Withnell Brothers came to the rescue by proffering the services of their "niggers," who knew the road, and who would be able to keep the stock well in hand. A yell for Jim and Friday brought up the two black boys, who had been coiled up asleep in the open. They came up as alertly as a schoolboy for a prize, and cheerfully began to round up the scattered horses, as soon as in broken English they were made to understand the work in hand. A white servant would have growled, or at all events become sullen if he had been told to saddle up at nine o'clock at night for a cheerless ride until the small hours, without getting as much as a "nip" or an extra plug of tobacco for overtime; but the black slaves of "way back" in Australia know nothing of overtime, or "a fair day's work." To them any day is fair, if it passes without the "boss" getting drunk, and cuffing them. In a few minutes after the natives were told that twenty-eight horses were wanted, the full tale was made up, and the thirsty animals, which had been eagerly sniffing for a drink among the bends of the Creek, were on the road to the well. As we sat down to supper we heard the horses, urged by the shouts of Jim and Friday, reluctantly clattering up the ravine, with the nephew and Ginx, the second driver, bringing up the rear. If they were not cursing the Government as they started out on their arduous and untimely errand, they deserve the guerdon of the good. While we were at tea a horseman rode in from Marble Bar with evil tidings. A telegraph message had come through to "The Bar," which is the only electric station in the whole of this part of the North-West, stating that Leonard Calvert had been smitten with typhoid fever, but he was said to be progressing favourably.



"TWO TO ONE ON THE PLAYER!"

At two o'clock in the morning we were roused from our blankets by a great noise of hoofs shaking the ground; the horses were returning from the well, and we picked ourselves up to escape being trampled upon. Jack and Ginx, who were thoroughly worn out, had a dismal report. The well was in an out-of-the-way place, over fearfully rough, hilly country, and it was nearer twelve than eight miles away. If there had been any feed for the horses they would have camped there till daylight, but the patch was as bare as a sandhill. And this is the country that, according to the boast of the Government, is well watered, thanks to their exertions.

DOLLYING STONE.

Daylight revealed Tambourah Creek to be a cleft between high mountains; there is scarcely a yard of level standing room; walls of frowning granite rise on every side. There were about eight tents in the place, a store, and what would have been a hotel, if the teamster who was to have brought a Christmas supply of liquor had not stayed with our peccant drover at Woodstock, so that there was nothing but water in the township, and not too much of that. We went along to see some of the miners who have pegged out leases for a couple of miles around the World's Fair, whose owners—a couple of Victorians—showed some splendid specimens, quartz "clogged" with gold, in veins as broad as a threepenny piece. They told us that they had been remarkably lucky. On reaching Roebourne they had hardly enough money to buy their horses and stores; if they could not find gold within a few weeks they intended to work for wages, but almost the first stone they struck with a hammer scintillated with the yellow metal, and they were now on the eve of selling the reef to a Syndicate, who had the means to put machinery on the ground. So far, they had only gone down on the stone a few feet, but it was all showing gold so freely that the party were sewing it up in bags, and keeping it in their tent for safety.

SCENE ON A WORKING MINE.

Western Shaw, a reefing field of some importance, derives its name from the Shaw River. It was a goldfield long before the treasure of the World's Fair was brought to light. Mr. Osborne kept the first hotel at "The Shaw," which is only seven miles from Tambourah Creek. From the peak overlooking Western Shaw, which nestles in a valley surrounded by hills, like a coot in tall sedges, there is one of the prettiest sights of the North-West, and when we saw it soon after dawn it was framed in the setting of an azure sky. "The Shaw," which originally, like all other rushes, had only a few gunyahs and tents to represent the township, has now some of the iron buildings which distinguish the permanent field from the alluvial rush. It was almost in a state of famine when we arrived, but the teamster whose waggon we had seen on the road put in an appearance later in the day, amid general rejoicings. The same afternoon, after having inspected the mines, which were being rapidly developed, we started on a long stage to Withnell's station, and reached it the following night without seeing any new feature in the mountainous country. The station lies at the foot of what is known locally as the Black Range, although it is not the range of that name which figures on the map. The run, which is one of the oldest in the North-West, is on the Shaw River, and it is devoted to the raising of sheep and horses. The stone homestead is built on the edge of a large and permanent pool in the river. Mr. George Withnell, the owner, gives us the heartiest of welcomes, and has killed the fatted calf to entertain so many visitors. Chatting after dinner, he tells us a great deal that we are glad to know about his pioneering experiences. On the whole, he says the seasons have been propitious. The disastrous flood of the Sherlock three years ago, did not extend to the Shaw. Mr. Withnell's district at that time enjoyed beneficent rains, which made feed abundant, without causing a deluge. This year the summer rains were so long in coming that Mr. Withnell was in some suspense as to how the season would turn out. If the thunderstorms did not soon appear, the year would be one of the worst on record. As last year had been dryer than usual, the river was unusually low, the pasturage nearly exhausted, and the stock were losing flesh. In answer to enquiries, Mr. Withnell went on to explain the details of what is virtually the slave system of the North-West. The black servant, it is true, enters into

FLIES AND FINE ART.

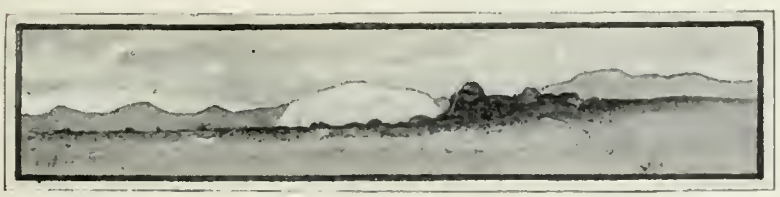
SOAK ON TALGA RIVER.

THE COLONY'S EARLIEST DAYS. II. A BULLOCK TEAM IN THE BUSH.

bondage voluntarily, and affixes "his mark" to the agreement in the presence of a magistrate, who must be satisfied that the boy or girl is not acting under coercion, but having signed, the native is not to be distinguished from a slave. He gets no wages, very little clothing, and works as long as his master chooses to order. I am referring now to the blacks who are employed by the teamsters and drovers. On the stations the aboriginals have what may be called good times, plenty to eat and little to do; in fact, there are always so many of them swarming about a homestead, that if the stock raisers did not charitably remember that they owe something to the original possessors of the soil, they would not submit to so large a call upon the rations. The police, under the direction of the magisterial "protectors," have a good deal to do in chasing runaway servants, and attempting, without much success, to estrange the dark-skinned Desdemona from the pale face. A trooper discovering a liaison is virtuously moved to carry the girl to the presence of the protector, or some other justice, but he is on a fool's errand. She cannot be kept in gaol all her life, and the moment she is let out of confinement she makes her way back to the object of her affections. There are far more half-caste children born every year than full-blooded blacks.

OHANA SANG,
Japanese Laundress, Bamboo Creek.

At Withnell's station, the tribe of youngsters are dressed according to their rank of age and usefulness. The little boys and girls wear a loin cloth. The older lads who look after the stock are promoted to the dignity of trousers, while the housemaids and nurses of the establishment are arrayed in the full glory of the costume that is the pride of a swarthy dasmel's heart. The trusted Abigail of the mistress of a pastoral property is always gorgeously conspicuous in a flaming red petticoat, a man's grey woollen shirt, with the tails falling exposed to the knees, and a light-coloured wideawake, or bushman's hat, ornamented with a cock's feather. This loose attire, which allows free play of the little supple figure, is not at all unbecoming to a willowy daughter of the woods. The combination of colours harmonises well with dark skin and lustrous eyes, besides being artistically correct, if we are to accept the uniforms of her



THE WHITE QUARTZ BLOW, PILBARRA.

Majesty's volunteers as models of good taste in the choice of tones. Two damsels accoutred in the dress of honour had the care of the son and heir of the squire of the Black Range, and they spoiled the young autocrat with kindness.

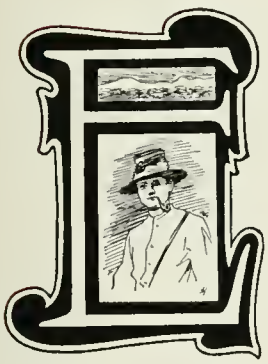
The homestead which rejoices in the possession of both a poultry yard and a vegetable garden (tended by the blacks), is right under the beetling shadow of the Black Range. The name of the mountain is very appropriate as applied to the ridge, which is as black as the ace of spades; the lower half is red. The irregular intermingling of the colours has a curious effect, as if a painter in blackening the crest had spilled an immense pot of paint. No other simile that I can think of, will so clearly convey an impression of the fantastic tracery of the black stains which are deeper in one place than another all along the slope, but which never touch the bottom. This lizzarre pattern of colouring is peculiar to a great deal of the hill country of the North-West; it is due to the presence of ironstone of varying shades of colour, from bronze to the hue of the raven's wing, lying upon a lighter base of granite of quartz.

A NATIONAL EMBLEM.

Chapter 25.

A Dry Stage—The Inquisitive Emu—Wild Dog Camp—At Nullagine—The Conglomerate Formation—A Stroll around its Leases—A Glance at its Morals—A Dangerous Ride—Cub Hunting in the North-West—A Native Banquet—Marble Bar: Its Mines and its Monumental Government Offices—"Ho! Ho! Merry Japan!"

By S. H. Whittaker.

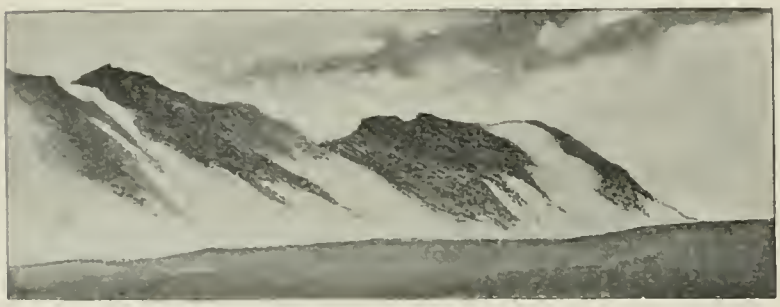


EARLY in the morning—after spending the night at the station—we left for the Nullagine, the longest and dryest stage of our journey; that is to say, the widest gap without meeting any settlement. About twenty horses, on whom the heat of the weather and the hard work had told severely, were left in the paddock to recruit. The first well on the road is at Flat Top Hill, twenty-eight miles from Withnell's. God help the waggon horses pulling a load for twenty-eight miles over these mountains in the blazing sun without a drink. It is too long a stretch for our team moving at a trot. Twenty-eight miles of drought at the slow walking pace of a waggon; twenty-eight miles, that is a day and-a-half's journey, when the coach passenger, sitting idly in his seat, applies to his water-bag for a long, deep pull every ten minutes. Twenty-eight miles, and the exhausted team stuck for an hour or two, perhaps three or four hours on the road. When the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals becomes an active force in Western Australia, they will be able to amerce the Government in heavy penalties on evidence that will make the angels weep. In pursuit of gold the Government are full of alertness, but they give scant attention to the claims of humanity. They can put down railway lines to the Yilgarn Goldfields with the greatest celerity, but they cannot dig a few wells to save beasts of burden from atrocious suffering from torturing thirst.

APPROACHING THE NULLAGINE.

The maps euphemistically say that there is a "pool" between the Station and the Flat Top well. Perhaps this is why wells have not been put down. But what is the use of a so-called pool that is dry in the summer time? We found the "pool;" it bore ancient signs that "once upon a time," as the fairy-books have it, it had

held water, probably on a day that every creek was running a banker after a thunderstorm. The road in front is even worse; for sixty miles it is in a state of nature, without a single well. The efficient Public Works Department complacently alleges that there are springs to be found. The Director of Public Works ought to sup at one of them as a vicarious sacrifice to impress upon him the privations travellers have to endure in a civilized country under his control. There are the Emu Springs, for instance, which take a lot of hunting for, and, like Falstaff's reasons, are hardly worth the finding. At last, a bit of damp, foul smelling ground is declared by Mr. Osborne to be the site of the springs. He pushes through some dank undergrowth, and points to a few pints of muddy water, befouled with the droppings of every bird and beast that is at large. The spade which the Mayor brought, on the principle that God helps those who help themselves, is plied, and a slight trickle of water begins to flow into the hole. The horses press forward, fighting with the drivers for a mouthful to wet their parched tongues. Only one horse can drink at a time; it is half a day's work to water the team.



A BIT OF THE BLACK RANGE, NOR'-WEST.

While we were at Emu Springs, a mother emu, with nine young ones in her wake, came stalking down the hillside whistling to her brood. She got pretty close to us before she realised that we were in possession of the water, whereupon, calling loudly to her chicks, she scuttled away, closely followed by her offspring. At different times we saw emus on the road. These birds are the most inquisitive of God's creations. If a rag is hung on a tent or a buggy pole, to flutter in the wind, the emu, in its anxiety to find out all about the object, will walk up to it, and fall an easy prey to the ambushed gun. The only occasion on which we got very near to a pair of the birds we were slowly climbing a steep hill. The emus, seeing the nodding heads of the horses, became deeply engrossed in the strange sight. They stopped in their flight, and came towards the leading coach, presenting so tempting a shot that Mr. Osborne got behind a tree to avail himself of it, but he had to run back to the leaders, which were getting into a knot. Even then the emus only walked away, wistfully regarding the cavalcade like a woman examining the new bonnet of her rival. Mr. Osborne started to follow them as they were leaving with a tempting, lingering step, but on seeing him in pursuit with a

POSSIBLE EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN THE BUSH.

gun, they took in the situation at a glance, and with one more hasty look to satisfy their curiosity, put on a spurt, and their long legs and longer stride, moving with the rapidity of a paddle wheel, soon carried them out of sight.

After almost vainly struggling to get water at another small spring, and hearing the doleful account of a teamster as to the drought on the road, we arrived at what is known as the Wild Dog Camp, about ten miles from the Nullagine. Here there is a well that was sunk by the owner of an abandoned station. The Camp is the gathering ground of all the knocked-up horses of the teams travelling between Roebourne and the Nullagine The well is in the bed of a creek where there is both feed and water, so that in a dry summer like that of last year, when the teams, owing to heavy pulling and spinifex, to say nothing of an insufficiency of water, get very low, the spot becomes the rendezvous of fully a hundred equine wrecks which must rest or die. They are in the care of men who make it their business to take charge of the disabled slaves, and to see that they are watered by blacks whom they employ for the purpose. We got to the well just as the horses were clustering round it for their mid-day drink. It is pleasing to relate, as an evidence that even in the remote interior, and among some of the roughest diamonds who find their way there, kindly actions are done, that our thirsty team was given the first of the water that was drawn. The overseers have very little to do, and spend most of their time turkey shooting, to vary both the monotony of their lives and the bill of fare. While we were lunching, a shot was fired, and in a few minutes one of the stockmen rode up with a turkey strapped to the pommel of his saddle. From him we heard of the exceptional dryness of the season on the Coongan route to Marble Bar from Port Hedland. Of the famine on the Roebourne route we were painfully aware from our own observation. It appeared that the teamsters had decided that they could no longer get their freight through without carrying fodder, and therefore, they were proposing to nearly double their tariff. This had caused the storekeepers to shorten their orders, so that, if rain did not fall soon, supplies would get very scarce and dear at the Nullagine, and the transport of machinery would be delayed.

SOLITUDE IN NUGGET-LAND. A PATENT DRY-BLOWER.

Being anxious to reach a good camping place before nightfall, where Mitchell grass grew plentifully, we only stayed a couple of hours at Wild Dog Camp, as the horses could get a drink a little further on by going a bit off the road. The way out of the camp served to show the strength of an Australian coach, which can be hauled over boulders and drop off

them two or three feet without straining a bolt or cracking a spring. No one except a gold seeker would have tried to get through these mountain passes on wheels. A passenger has to get out so often that he arrives at his journey's end in excellent pedestrian form, with all the advantages of an athlete training in a Turkish bath, to reduce weight and improve the wind. The Mitchell grass was so grateful to the horses that there was no need to hobble them to keep them together. All round the little patch of grass the spinifex grew so high on the rich fertile banks of a winding creek, that some of us were tempted to try a bed of the wiry vegetation, which is as elastic as a spring mattress. The spinifex would have been a great success as a couch had not some of the prickly spears, piercing the single blanket and some flesh besides, caused sudden uprisings in the night, the striking of a light, and the careful extraction, with thumb and forefinger, of the barb. In the morning, after travelling some distance further through the hills, we got into the Nullagine, and found the battery of the mine going, although it was Sunday. They don't take much account of the days of the week in the interior of the North-West; perhaps they did not even know that it was Sunday. At any rate, it is safe to predict that it will be a very long time before a clerical shepherd goes there in search of the stray sheep of the human fold. Roebourne, three hundred miles away, is the nearest place where the sound of the church-going bell, or the calling of sinners to repentance, distinguishes what ought to be the day of rest, from the other six days of the week. The Nullagine Camp—it would be too grandiloquent to call it a township—takes its name from the storm channel that is called a river, on whose banks the miners' tents and an iron hotel and a store are set up. But the rich reefs and conglomerate formation of the Nullagine, which is only in the first stage of being opened up, are sure to make it an important centre, which it would have been years ago if machinery had been obtainable. It is only within the last few months that Messrs. Osborne and Co. managed to bring from Marble Bar the five-head battery, which is the only plant on the field, although several other leaseholders are actively endeavouring to follow suit. The teamsters are loaded up with several engines and batteries, but the condition of the roads, added to the scarcity of feed and water, has caused the delivery of the freight to be very slow. We were treated like princes at this, the headquarters of our chaperone, the Mayor of Roebourne. The primitive resources of the camp had been reinforced in every possible way, to mark the miners'

A MINER—NULLAGINE.

appreciation of Mr. Calvert's spirited enterprise in organising the trip, and our friends were visibly disappointed when they saw from a distance, as we were driving up to the river, that he was not in his accustomed place on the box seat. On learning that our chief had been invalided on the way, there were many of the keenest expressions of regret, together with anxious hopes that he would be speedily convalescent, and carry out his visit to the Nullagine. The camp there is wonderfully neat and well devised. The tents have a roof of boughs above the canvas, raised sufficiently high to allow a cool draught to circulate between the two coverings. The sides, too, are laced with saplings, so that the ventilation is very thorough and agreeable. A hospital could not have been kept more scrupulously neat and clean. The stretchers were covered with snow-white counterpanes, for plenty of pure soft water is to be got by sinking a little way into the river bed, and our friends are fond of using it for washing purposes. A great deal is thrown on the ground in and around the tent, to keep down the temperature. The hot wind, striking the damp surfaces, becomes a refreshing zephyr, in the same way that the bather finds the wind blow very keenly upon his wet skin while drying himself in the open air. The result of all this attention being given to health and comfort is that the camp is kept in a very sanitary condition, and sickness is almost unknown. If the place had been looked after by the most precise of wives, it could not have been more trimly garnished, but, unfortunately, every one of our friends, without an exception, had had to leave his wife behind him in civilization when he went to make his fortune at the Nullagine. There is not a white woman nearer than Marble Bar. Native women are very numerous, but the police try to keep them at a distance. When the troopers are called away on long rides to other mining camps, the natives swarm into the Nullagine, but disappear before the men in the blue uniform return home. One of the mounted police told me that there is a kind of bush telegraphy in vogue among the blacks, which enables them to inform all their companions, perhaps fifty miles apart, of his movements, so that they are able to give him a wide berth.

"GIBEM BACCA."

The leasehold acquired by Messrs. Osborne and Co. is about three-quarters of a mile from the "river," and consists of mountains of conglomerate. This kind of formation is not found anywhere else in the North-West. So far, it has proved well worth working, in spite of the smallness of the battery and the heavy outlay involved in setting it up so far beyond the seaboard, the cartage having cost more than the machinery, for which, of course, the owners, who are developing the producing resources of the Colony, are very grateful to the Government for the attention and expenditure they have bestowed on the roads, of which a pack-horse, a goat, or a mule might not complain. So far, the conglomerate has yielded from an ounce to two ounces to the ton, which is very payable, as the stuff can be taken out

easily from the face in any quantity. For the benefit of non-mining readers, it may be as well to state that conglomerate consists of gravel of various kinds of gold-bearing stone stuck together like almonds in molasses. There is no trouble in looking for a lead or reef in strata of this description. The hills around the Nullagine consist of nothing else, although it remains to be seen whether they all carry payable gold. We went out to see the one that Messrs. Osborne and Co. have cut into. Nothing could be more simple than the way the work was being done. A slice was taken off the crown of the hill and everything that the shovel removed was put through the battery. When the conglomerate is exhausted there will be no hills at the Nullagine, but that will not be in our time, no matter how long we may live. But the pith of this description, from the point of view of the mining investor, is that the mining of this kind is very economical. Perhaps a miner might disdain to call it mining; it is much like ordinary navvies' work, such as is done in the making of every railway. There is no timbering, no hoisting of the stone, nor scope for the exercise of mining skill and experience, as to the best place to put shafts or drives. The Nullagine has every prospect of becoming celebrated as a diamond as well as a goldfield, for as soon as the battery was started, precious gems, which the stampers had not smashed fine enough to allow them to escape with the tailings, were found in the boxes. Diamonds have also been picked out of the conglomerate, and experts have declared the stones to be of a very superior quality. Some of the larger stones, which are of great lustre, have been forwarded to Mr. Calvert.

MR. T. WALTERS, NULLAGINE.

We had a very interesting visit to the workings, and experienced the truth of the proverb that "seeing is believing." On all sides, as we strolled up the valley, we could see that the Nullagine had been a most popular rush. The ground, over a wide extent of country, had been put through the dry-blower, but only to the two feet depth of the surface of chocolate loam; reefing is now the resource of the district. At the face, Mr. Osborne and his partners invited us to try a "prospect" for ourselves. Mr. Brenton Symons, the expert of our party, knocked out,

NOTE OF A DINNER IN CAMP.

with a pick, a piece of the conglomerate from the solid mass, choosing his own spot for the blow. The sample was dollied, or broken up and washed, but before the water was applied, coarse gold could be seen in the sample. When the washing had been done there was a surprisingly good "show" in the dish. The glistening grains made a semi-circle of gold, fully an eighth of an inch thick, all round the pan. Mr. Symons seemed to have "struck it lucky." Surely, we thought, that "prospect" could not be an average sample of the conglomerate. We were invited to try again. Another of the visitors took a gad and broke out a specimen from a different part of the face. The yellow rim in the dish was as thick as it had been before. Two more trials were made, and enough gold was obtained to gladden the heart of a miner, but the yield was not equal to the previous washings. But, by this time it had been proved that there was gold through the face, for our pickings had speckled it freely. Mr. Osborne declared—but it hardly needed the skill of a mining engineer to demonstrate the fact—that if the formation was anything like as good all over the hill, it would pay sensational dividends. Messrs. Osborne and Co. were candid enough to say that they did not think that the same remarkable percentage of gold would be obtained from the entire bulk of the conglomerate, but they added that something less than that average would pay handsomely for the crushing, and no one could gainsay that. But before we left the district, we had other evidence of the value of the leasehold. While we were at Marble Bar, a horseman rode over there from the Nullagine with a bar of gold, the proceeds of the month's work of the battery, which, as I have said before, is only a small one of five-head of stampers. The courier produced to Mr. Osborne 82 ounces of gold, the yield of 50 tons of the conglomerate. Mr. Osborne carried the gold with him into Roebourne and deposited it at the Union Bank there as soon as we arrived. The battery, insufficient in power as it is, has been doing splendid work in showing the capabilities of the Nullagine. The owners are so anxious to prove the resources of the district, that although it would be far more profitable for them to crush their own stone even if the battery had five-fold its power, they undertake to put through parcels for their brother leaseholders. These have been so well satisfied with the results which they have obtained, that the Nullagine at the date of our visit was on the eve of a big step forward, and by the time these lines appear

MR. WITHNELL.

JACK REED, COOK ON MR. WITHNELL'S STATION.

in print, several batteries, each of them much larger than Messrs. Osborne and Co.'s unpretending pioneer, will be adding to the gold export of Western Australia. On returning from inspecting the different workings, all of which were most hopefully regarded by Mr. Brenton Symons, on account of the peculiar combination of gold-bearing ores which is to be found in the hills of the Nullagine, we had a delicious bath at the police camp, the officer in charge of which gave us *carte blanche* to use as much water as we liked, despite the fact that every drop of the shower—that we could hardly forbear to let run for an inordinately long time—had to be carried from the spring in the river, from which the battery is fed. If the reader should reproach us with greed, or of abusing the laws of hospitality, I shall meekly bow to the censure, if the censor will travel in the North-West and find it in his heart to turn the tap off quickly. If he can do that, he is the stuff of whom martyrs are made, as the late Sir Henry Parkes wrote of himself once when he indited his book to describe what he had suffered, when he was fighting the cause of the people.

ON MR. WITHNELL'S SHEEP STATION.

The number of half-caste children to be seen at the Nullagine shows that the moral law is not much respected, although the miners do not openly live in concubinage with the native women. The indulgence which the men of the tribe extend towards the adultery of the women with Europeans, is responsible to some extent for the free admixture of white blood in the rising generation. The birth of a half-caste child seems to be regarded as something in the light of an honour done to the family. The present of a plug of tobacco, or a glass of ale, is, we are assured, sufficient to induce a black to connive at, if not conspire to bring about the infidelity of his wife, if a white is the tempter, but unchastity with one of colour is often the cause of bloodshed, and of the infliction of punishment on both of the guilty pair, under the sanction of tribal laws. To give alcoholic liquor is a serious offence against the statute, and there have been many convictions, but unless the aboriginals turn Queen's evidence, it is very difficult to sheet home the charge. It is

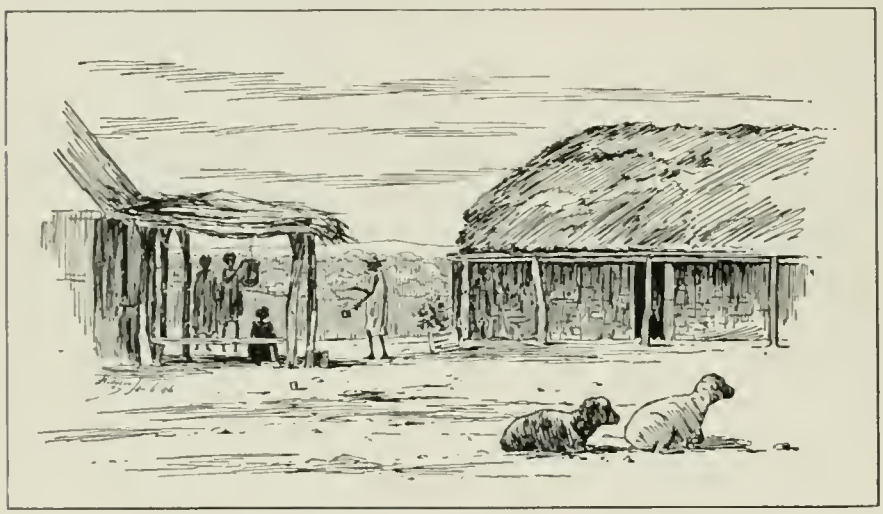
noticeable that the half-caste children are of much stronger physique than the full-blooded blacks, notwithstanding that consanguinity is forbidden by the tribes, who make matches in a very methodical manner, according to the lines of the genealogical tree. The wayward impulse of love is frowned out of existence under the persuasive influence of a club. The young brave looking for a wife cannot choose for himself. His *fiancee* was apportioned him when he was in his cradle, the girl child being selected from the most remote of the four tribes with which his people intermarry. The remote relationship of every fourth generation is as far as the tribes can get from the evils of degeneracy of blood, as they would find their enemies outside this radius. It does not appear from the observation of such old residents as Mr. Withnell that there is any marriage ceremony, the nuptial knot being tied by the simple act of the swain taking possession of his allotted bride, but unchastity is treated as a heinous offence, so long as the gay Lothario is not a paleface. In treating the man as the tempter, and awarding him the most serious punishment, the blacks perhaps set an excellent example to the civilised races. The adulterer, Mr. Withnell says, has the whole tribe against him, and he has to submit to being speared by the aggrieved husband, without attempting to defend himself, or making reprisals. The severity of the wound depends upon the magnanimity of the head of the household whose domestic peace has been wrecked. Thus the spear may be used to merely prick the skin, to inflict a trifling puncture, or it may be driven savagely into a fleshy but not vital spot, disabling the sufferer for a long time, and perhaps leaving him with a limp or stiffness for life.

ON MR. BROCKMAN'S SHEEP STATION.

After spending more than a day at the Nullagine, we started for Marble Bar, accompanied by Mr. Osborne's partner and a friend, who drove their own pair. As it was reported that the water in the next well "up the road" was putrid, owing to a kangaroo having been drowned in it, we borrowed a black boy to show us a "soak," which could be reached by striking across country. The lad, finding himself among strangers, was visibly unhappy, and sat like an image of Silence cut in ebony, from whom no sign of life except an occasional "chuck" of a black finger to point the way. At supper he was as cowed as a caged hare, wrapped in a moody reverie, and seemingly yearning to hie back to

WOOL PRESS ON A SHEEP STATION, NOR'-WEST.

his friends at the Nullagine. Taylor's well being unfit for use, owing to having been left without the simple device of a cover to keep vermin from falling into it, we had to push on after sundown on a most adventurous ride over the worst part of the road for a distance of seven miles to the next well, but fortunately the moon was shining brightly. The track was the one traversed by Mr. Thomas Withnell when, at the outbreak of the rush to Marble Bar, he got across the ranges, which had hitherto been regarded as impenetrable by wheels. In performing this feat he had gained renown, but he had crawled through in daylight, and our drivers had to steer four-horse coaches, with man-traps obscured by the shadows of the moon, and the teams rather too lively in the cool air after their rest at the Nullagine for safe travelling down steep and rugged descents, in which the silvery rays were lost in blackness. At one place there was a tree in the middle of the craggy road, with the certainty of the coach being pitched into a crevasse in passing it, if the leaders did not swing sharply round at right angles, or the driver should misjudge the precise strategical moment for his strong sudden pull on the off reins. But this, and all the other hazards of the journey, were passed in safety, and we were at the well by nine o'clock, with the prospect of reaching Brockman's station soon after breakfast next morning.



ON MR. WITHNELL'S SHEEP FARM.

The chief difference between Brockman's and Withnell's stations, with the exception of the absence of the Black Range, is that the former swarms with wild native children. At Withnell's the youngsters, clothed and tame as a pet lamb, flocked about the coaches on our arrival, like schoolboys about a candy shop, inquisitive to know all about us, buzzing as loudly with their chatter as a hornets' nest. But there was a great scare when we got to Brockman's. All round the homestead boys "with noddings on" scampered away like rabbits, making for their holes in a warren, while the girls, who wore a chemise of coloured print, went to cover, and peeped at us timidly from behind any nook or corner of the building they could find. After a while, perceiving that we were not thirsting for their gore, some of the urchins stealthily crawled a little nearer to make a reconnaissance, ever on the alert to bolt if one of us looked in their direction. A feint to catch one of them lent wings to their heels. The sporting member of the party was open to make a wager that none of us could run one of the imps down, and the gauntlet was taken up by a party on condition that he was given five minutes for the job. The victim was indicated, and the speculator let

himself go, but the youngster, finding himself pursued, lost his turn of foot, and the course proved much shorter than had been expected. The pursuer, amid a chorus of ironical applause from his companions, and shrieks of indignation from the gins, which was very amusing to the onlookers, and an outrage to the fond mothers of the boys, rapidly gained ground on his quarry, who was almost paralysed with fright, and collapsed with a scream and a quiver when he was run into, while his friends looked out from their hiding places at a safe distance with as much horror as if they expected that we were about to kill and eat the captive. The man who won his wager, flushed with success, offered to catch all the niggers on the station at the same price, and give discount on wholesale lots for prompt cash, but as the lads would not show better sport than trapped hares, the offer found no takers.

IN THE DIAMOND HILLS, NULLAGINE.

Having watered the horses and enjoyed the hospitality of the owners of the station, we pushed on to the next well, that is fifteen miles from the homestead, on the road to Marble Bar, camping for lunch in the bed of a creek, near to where a party of blacks were drawing water for a large flock of sheep. The dusky shepherds were just back from a hunting expedition, in which a varmint looking cur, no bigger than an Italian greyhound, with a coat like an Irish terrier, and a tail no longer than that of a rabbit, had been quite an hero, having killed two large kangaroos and three wallabies with his one set of teeth. As soon as the sheep were watered, the aboriginals prepared for a gorge. The gins hauled on to a large fire the two kangaroos, without stopping to skin or disembowel them. As the game began to be toasted the women merely scraped off the charred hair with a stick, leaving the skin to become as crisp as the crackling of Charles Lamb's toothsome porker. The smartest native boy whom we had seen was among the expectant crowd, whose mouths were watering for the feast, but he was not so greedy as to forget to be polite. "Come and have some,"

NEAR THE JUST-IN-TIME.

he cheerily said to us while we were watching the cooking. "It will be very good," he added, in the purest English, for Morgan is the pet of the station, and has been quick-witted enough to make the best use of his opportunities. "How long will it be before it is ready," asked one of the guests who was honoured with the invitation. "Oh! just as long as for people to sit down"—meaning, "There will be a piece for you at once, if you cannot wait for the entire roast." "Thanks," was the rejoinder; "how much of the kangaroos will be left, Morgan?" "Only their bones after we are done, and Bob (the dog) has some. The troughs are full, so we can have a sleep," replied the lad, with an air of gluttonous relish at the thought of a distended stomach and a long snore. Here, then, was a genuine savage, in spite of all that contact with Europeans, and some education could do for him. What was bred in the bone came out in the flesh at the sight of the smoking kangaroo, in which he longed to fix his teeth and tear with the ferocity of a dingo. "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," say the people of the North-West, "nor a Christian out of

THE COONGAN MINE, MARBLE BAR.

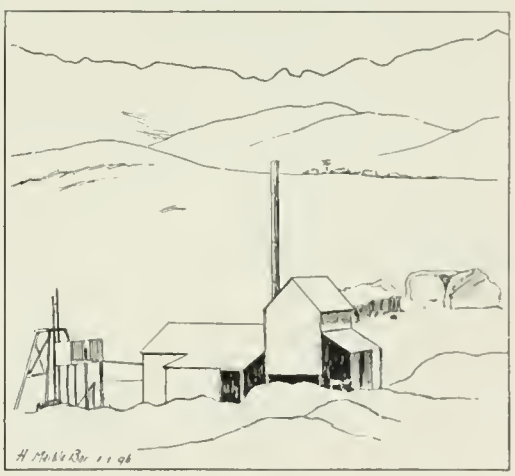
an Australian black." The experiment had been tried on Morgan, the most promising material that could be found, and Morgan was a savage still.

Marble Bar, which you will only reach if your horses are mule-like in their climbing and staying powers, is so called from the large belt of quartzite that extends across the Coongan River, upon which the town is situated. The Marble Bar people think the so-called marble is equal to the best of the Carrara quarries, but the geologists to whom samples have been sent, place the stone in no higher grade than that of an excellent building material, for which there would be a large demand if the Bar were close to the town. The Government offices, which are at least twenty-five years in advance of present requirements, have been built of the stone, which certainly looks well in the "piece," as the drapers say of a roll of cloth. The offices are quite as large as those at Perth, and are handsomely designed. If half the cost of this official palace had been spent on the water supply, and the improvement of the road through Pilbarra, the Government would have had some defence to the charge that they have neglected the North-Western Goldfields. When the plans for the offices were being drawn, the Cabinet, it can be imagined, said to the Colonial Architect: "There is plenty of stone at Marble Bar, and the people are proud of it. Let us give them a large sample of it in these buildings, and we shall hear no more murmurings

about want of railways, roads, and water." Marble Bar is what may be called the capital of the Nullagine district. Talga Talga and Bamboo Creek lie to the north-east, and the Just in Time to the south and west. Port Hedland and Condon are the outlets on the seaboard for these goldfields, as they are about one hundred miles nearer than Cossack. A railway from Port Hedland to "The Bar" is being agitated for in opposition to the route *via* Roebourne. The Nullagine is so nearly midway between Roebourne and Port Hedland, that the people there are neutral in the battle of the routes; all they ask is, that whichever railway is to be made, it shall be made quickly.

IN THE DIAMOND HILLS, NULLAGINE.

The mining man will find the Alexandria the best developed property at "The Bar." This mine has been opened up by a new manager—who came in when things were at a rather low ebb—so successfully, that dividends are now being paid. The whole of the operations are upon a most workmanlike scale, and an inspection leaves upon the mind of the visitor the impression that the interests of the shareholders could not have been placed in better hands. There are other mines in the vicinity, but none of them are in nearly such a forward state of development as the Alexandria, for it must be remembered that this is a very young reefing field. But sinking and driving are so far advanced that the necessarily slow arrival of machinery is the only obstacle in the way of good returns being made to the owners for their spirited enterprise, so far from the familiar highways of the world. Of water there is plenty, and labour is to be had, although it is somewhat costly, as might be expected from the high price of food, and the difficulty of reaching such an out-of-the-way part of the world. It is so easy to get water by sinking, that even the lethargic Public Works Department has found energy enough to put down a well for the gratuitous use of the public, including the Japanese and Chinese laundrymen, who had plenty to do and plenty to get when their reckonings are paid, for in such a sweltering climate clean clothes and deep drinks are the two luxuries upon which every man will spend his last shilling with a willing mind.



THE STRAY SHOT, MARBLE BAR.

It is too early in the day to expect much in the way of architectural display from even such an important centre as Marble Bar. The wages of masons are so high that no one has ventured to vie with the Government in rearing stone buildings, which a long purse would gladly obtain to shut out the tropical

sun. The majestic suite of offices which have been dedicated to the Civil servants, make those gentlemen the envy of the townspeople, who are grilled in iron ovens, but who would scorn to utter a grumble at the waste of the taxpayers' money in the mammoth buildings over the way. The Government white elephant is, indeed, the pride of the town, and no one is so unpatriotic as to think it is ludicrously large—a giant keeping company with a dwarf. The slightest suggestion on the part of a visitor that the Treasurer has been foolishly generous, is met with such crushing looks of disdain, that the unfriendly critic is emphatically warned that he had better quit such dangerous ground if he does not wish to wear out his welcome. The billiard rooms in the hotels furnish the chief amusement. The further we travel the more wildly unskilful the play becomes; at Marble Bar the balls are usually rammed with such force that they are rarely on the table for two minutes together. The spectator is vividly reminded of the familiar American caricature, "Two to go: got 'em both"—only that truth proves to be stranger than fiction, in some of the vagaries of the ivory spheres.

THE LATE MR. WALTER MARSH.

The Japanese women occupy one of the largest buildings in the town, by far the largest private residence. The house, which stands on the ledge of a hill within sight of the main street, is divided into about a dozen dormitories, and encircled with a broad verandah, which is a favourite promenading place of the almond-eyed Aspasias. The dormitories are protected with wooden shutters and iron bars, not only as a precaution against the "willy willy," but to prevent the intrusion of unauthorised visitors. The main entrance is always guarded by a janitor, in the person of a middle-aged duenna, whose faded charms have relegated her to the post of manager of the establishment. The rooms are very simply furnished, but around the walls the naked wood is agreeably relieved by the artistic arrangement of bright coloured Japanese curiosities—fans, and shell ornaments. The young women appear to be between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. All of them, with one exception (a Malay), are Japanese, mostly under the medium height, and of slender figure. The Malay is of a more buxom type, and of a much darker hue of skin than her companions. In the daytime the girls are rarely seen; they are reclining on their couches, smoking cigarettes, fanning themselves, or bathing, of which they are very fond. In the evening, dressed in their Oriental robes, they take the

MR. ALBERT E. PAYNE.

air on the verandah, receive their friends, and entertain them with solos on an instrument something like a mandolin. If the stranger should prefer it they will sing, play cards, or chat with many coquettish airs in broken English. On holidays, cigars and liquor will be handed round in the main hall, which is gaily decorated with lanterns of various design and colour. These daughters of Belial play the part of hostesses in a charming, dainty way, in which there is no hint of grossness. They glide about in their flowing and graceful vestments, with a noiseless step and girlish sprightliness, eschewing both

"I AM DREAMING, I AM DRE-E-E-E-MING." NEW YEAR'S EVE IN THE NOR'-WEST.

bad language and liquor. The house is always conducted in the most orderly way, as it is an affair of honour among the miners never to make a brawl in "Jap-town." An incident of New Year's Eve which came under our own notice, will show the decorum that is commonly observed. An hour or two before the advent of the New Year, Marble Bar was very noisy with holiday rejoicings. There was a great deal of health drinking, and no thought of closing the hotels as long as the stock of grog would hold out. A procession was roughly formed, headed by an improvised band, playing upon every kind

of gear that would make a clatter or a brazen din. The gong of one hotel, and the steel triangle of the other, were both fractured by the revellers in the rivalry as to who could make the most deafening noise. The procession called as a surprise party at the houses of the most popular of the leading residents, who responded to an ovation by treating the visitors. Then the thought struck the leader of the line—"Let's go and see the Japs," and with one accord the crowd swarmed up to the place with tin kettles rattling, and horns braying, and were hospitably entertained by the girls. Then the procession went home in a high state of good humour, and quietly dispersed. If the affair had taken place in a town the papers would doubtless have been full of sensational head-lines—"An Alarming Disturbance in the City," or "Domiciliary Outrage in the Japanese Quarter;" and the police would have put in an active and ill-judged appearance.

LORD OF THE BOOMERANG.

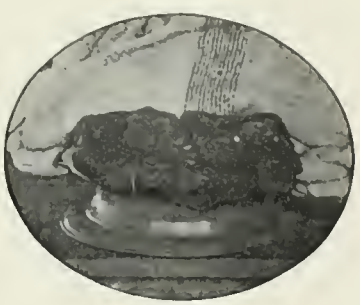
Chapter 26.

A Peep at Talga Talga—The Fatal Heat—In Praise of our Teams—A Horrible Experience—The Inhumanity of the Public Works Department—Indications of a Storm—Fulfilment of the Indications—On the Homeward Journey—A Chow's Lucky Find—A Surprise Party—A Trooper's Life in the North-West.

By S. H. Whittaker.

A STAMP OF THE COLONY.

THE journey from Marble Bar to Talga Talga and Bamboo Creek necessitated our taking a fresh team of horses and another driver, as Mr. Osborne desired to take stock prior to handing over the hotel and store, in which he was interested, to a purchaser. The road to the two most distant goldfields in the Colony, whither we were now bound, is rather more mountainous, and just as short of water as that we had already traversed. So far, only preparatory mining work has been done at Talga Talga and Bamboo Creek, where we had a very hearty reception, although the managers and their men expressed much regret at the enforced absence of Mr. Calvert. The reefs are situated in very rugged country, similar to that at Tambourah Creek, but that is a small matter, so long as you can see the quartz so thickly encrusted with gold, that it pays to "dolly" it in the absence of a battery. We had been prepared to see some exceedingly rich specimens after the exhibition that was made in Perth of the cap of a Talga Talga reef, fully half of which consisted of the gleaming metal, and we were not disappointed. The pride of the "jeweller's shop" that was placed before our admiring eyes, was a nugget of pure gold, weighing one hundred and forty-five ounces, which had been picked up by one of the bosses of a shift in the course of a Sunday morning's walk. As the owner of this great "slug" was a photographer of no mean ability, our artist, Mr. Hodgson, was able to carry away with him a sun picture of the treasure, in order to convince "doubting Thomases" that he was not drawing the "long bow," when he reproduced the welcome stranger in the pages of this volume. This locality has produced many other fine nuggets, some of which have been brought in by natives, and bartered to the whites for a few sticks of


145 OZ. SLUG.
Found at Talga Talga, Nor'-West, W.A., by S. J. Becher, May, 1895.

tobacco. From the indications we saw, it was evident that Talga Talga and the Creek will be great mining fields within the next few years, when the difficulties attending the setting up of powerful machinery to work them have been overcome. After having spent nearly two days in the inspection of the local mines, we commenced our return trip to the sea-board, and centred all our hopes upon being able to catch the Albany steamer at Cossack, which port she was expected to leave on the 10th January for the south.

At Marble Bar we received confirmation of the news of the illness of Leonard Calvert. He was said to be doing well, but the weather had been so intensely hot that we were anxious about him. Several people had died of heat apoplexy at "The Bar," causing a great diminution in the call for whiskey, and an inordinate consumption of ginger beer and lemonade. A spasm of temperance had smitten the community, but one of the publicans, who was kept up half the night brewing "soft tack" for his customers, sardonically said it would not last long—not so long as it would take the corpses to get cold in their graves. On Sunday morning, 5th of January, we turned our backs on Marble Bar soon after daylight, *en route* for Roebourne, as it was necessary that we should travel very hard if we were to catch the boat. The only fear was that the horses would not hold out after their ill-treatment by the defaulting drover on the outward run. So far, in spite of all the exactions put upon the teams in the shape of cruel weather, terribly heavy roads and long stages, their endurance had been a great triumph for West Australian blood and compressed fodder. They had gone through a trial that would have knocked up ordinary horses in two or three days, and some of them had been yoked up day after day for a fortnight. In spite of careful selection, there were some duffers in the lot which had thrown extra strain upon the honest pullers, but others had equalised the average by turning out superior to their warranty. The hardy, staunch beasts, had kept us fully abreast of our time table, and had enabled us to make up for the delay occasioned by Mr. Calvert's illness, and the breakdown of the drover. Of the thirty-three horses employed in the expedition, only one had proved to be an arrant jade in harness, and he had done good service as a saddle horse; but having three hundred miles still to go, we felt the full force of the axiom which emphasises the folly of "hallooing before you are out of the wood." It had been proved that those drivers who insist that a horse must be well matured before he is fit to take part in such a journey, know what they are talking about. The most courageous well-bred colt would go to pieces

PORTRAIT OF A "DRY BLOWER."
Drawn at the spot where the Great Nugget was found, near Talga Talga.

in the performance of so unusual a task. The younger horses, who required a lot of holding at the outset, were the first to cry a halt, while the steady old stagers, perhaps a trifle gone in the wind, and stiff in the legs, kept up a steady trot day after day, from daylight to dark, with only a short feeding time at mid-day. A little way out of "The Bar," on a new track to the Just-in-Time, where we wished to call, there was such a forbidding precipice to get down, that it looked like a forlorn hope for the coaches to reach the bottom in safety. The leading horses were taken out and the wheels strapped together, as the failure of the ordinary breaks would have caused a catastrophe. All except the drivers left the vehicles, which lurched and pitched down the declivity like a cockle shell in a heavy sea-way. Winding in and out the valleys of the range we reached the Just-in-Time, which at that moment was the scene of the happy termination of a tragedy, in which a miner named Charles Norling had made a desperate fight for life, with the odds twenty to one against him. The man lay in a tent, the picture of exhaustion. His face was livid; deep purple shadows framed the deeply sunken sockets of his eyes, and he was so wasted that the

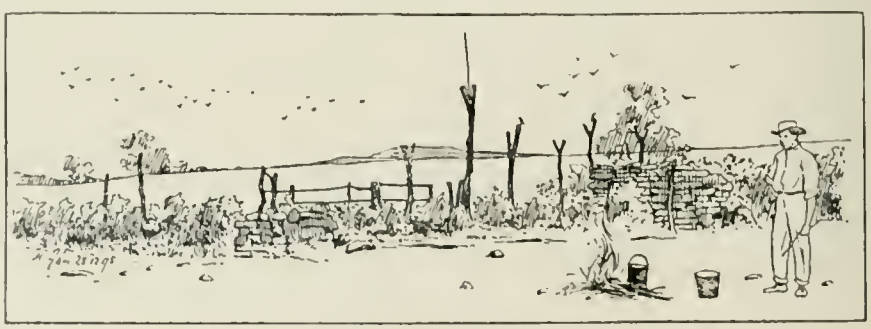
VIEW FROM THE CAMP.

sinews of his arms stood in ridges on the bones, from which the flesh had disappeared. The sufferer, as we bent over him, roused himself a little from his stupor, passed a hot hand over his throbbing head, and strove to speak. His utterance was slow and thick, his swollen tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. Seeing his condition, we begged him not to distress himself, and learned his story from those who had saved him from perishing of thirst. It appeared that the man had started to walk from the Nullagine to Marble Bar, a distance of ninety miles. He took the route by way of the Black Range, which he had been over before, and therefore he relied upon getting as much water as he could drink, and carry from the well there. Before he had reached the Black Range he had drained his water bag to the last drop, and was parched with thirst. He pulled up a bucket of water to have a drink, and, to his horror, he found that the water was black and putrid: a large kangaroo was floating at the bottom of the well. Norling was in a desperate extremity. He must either drink the stinking water, or must go nearly twenty miles further before he could wet his lips. He fought against the temptation, but carrying some of the filthy

liquid in his bag as a last resource, he started for the Just-in-Time camp, on reaching which his hope of life depended. As he strode along in the burning sun, he gradually weakened in his determination not to touch the slimy, foul water in his bag. Those who may think it strange that he should have succumbed to the torture, have never travelled in the tropics, or known a thirst that is worse than death. He must drink, if he died for it, sickening as it is to think of such a draught. The fœtid liquid, of course, made the wretched traveller violently ill. He was seized with violent pain and vomiting; he became more feverishly thirsty than before; his head swam, and he faltered in his stride. In a dazed way he had some recollection of having been told that there was a rock hole in the Glenarring Gorge, in the ranges, which he had to cross before he reached the camp which he was making for, and staggering with pain and weakness, he strove with the determination of a drowning man clutching at a straw, to get to the Gorge before he should fall exhausted to perish in the desert. Hour after hour he struggled on, fighting for his life, with the sun mounting higher and more pitilessly in the heavens, until he felt himself growing delirious. Every moment his sufferings from want of water were becoming worse, but with his tongue swelling in his mouth with the agony of thirst, he had sufficient resolution to throw away his bag, lest he should drink again and die. But a new calamity befell him. Night came on, and in the darkness he missed the marked tree that pointed to the Gorge, which is half-a-mile off the road. By the time that he realised his mistake, he was almost at his last gasp.

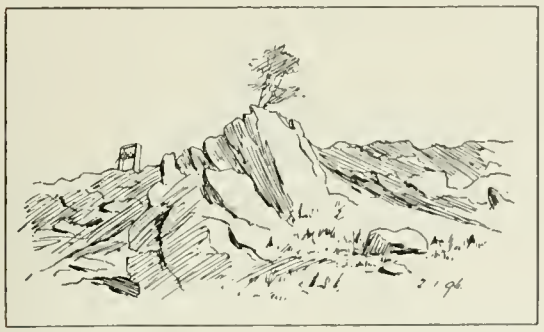
MR. BECHER, WHO FOUND THE GREAT SLUG AT TALGA TALGA.

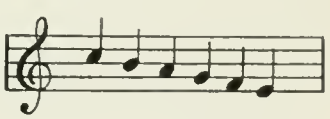
At sunset he had thrown away his swag and clothes, in order that they might not encumber his failing strength. And all through the tormenting hours till day dawned, he feebly fought his way to the Just-in-Time, which was now his only chance of succour. When daylight came he was quite worn out. The sun rose, and scorched his naked flesh, and he fell, as he thought, to rise no more. He lay roasting, raving, all that day and night. But



RUINS OF A SHANTY.

help was near at hand. There were hurrying to his rescue two horsemen, who had called at the Black Range well on the day after Norling had left it. When they found the water putrid, and with the sagacity of bushmen noted the tracks of a swagsman who had filled his bag at the foul cistern, they guessed that a tragedy was near at hand, and they galloped to the rescue. They soon came upon Norling's water bag, and following up his trail they saw that he had passed the marked tree which pointed to the water in the Glenarring Gorge. His footmarks showed that he had gone by without getting a drink, and now their fears deepened that he had met with an evil fate. Putting spurs to their almost exhausted horses, they passed increasing signs of disaster—the wretched man's clothes scattered by the wayside. A little further on in their headlong pursuit, they saw the miserable wayfarer lying in the track all but dead, and snatched him from the jaws of the grave. They carried him gently to the Just-in-Time, and the miners tended him assiduously with such restoratives as the resources of their rude camp could provide, so that he soon returned to consciousness, and when we saw him he had every prospect of recovering. Surely no comment is needed to point the moral of this painful case, which is that it is the duty of the Government to maintain a supervision over the wells, to prevent them becoming sources of contagion. In our short trip we came across two wells which were reeking with abominations, through game falling into them, while in eager quest to slake their thirst. In each case, from the advanced state of the decomposition of the animals, it was evident that they had remained for weeks in the water that furnishes the only supply of travellers. The pollution had been reported far and wide, but no action was taken by the officers of the Public Works Department to remedy the nuisance, or to clear out the wells and cover their mouths to prevent a repetition of the dangerous scandal. The neglect of the authorities to do their duty in this respect can hardly be too strongly reprobated. Their remissness would be bad enough if the water had only to be used by stock, but to condemn human beings to drink such filthy emanations as we found at Taylor's and the Black Range, is an outrage upon health and decency. The way to bring the horror of the situation home to the sleek, highly-salaried officers of the Department, who are supposed to protect people from perishing for want of water in the arid tracts of the vast North-Western territory, is to imagine for a moment that Perth Reservoir should become befouled with the rotten carcases of several hundred bullocks, and that the citizens must consume the hideous concoction for weeks together, while it was nobody's business to remove the impurities, and scour the tank. The execrations of an angry populace, the outcry of indignation would rend the air; the supine officials would be mobbed in the streets. But it is a far cry from Pilbarra to Perth, and atrocities of defective oversight are



"KING OF TIMBUCTOO" REWARD CLAIM, NEAR BAMBOO CREEK.

NOTE OF "BELL BIRD."

inflicted upon the Norlings of the North-West with impunity. If we had not happened to be calling at the Just-in-Time camp that Sunday morning, his suffering and peril would never have been heard of, except as a topic of compassionate gossip among the miners of the immediate district. The failure of the Government men to keep the water supply of the wilderness in a reasonably clean condition, is the more culpable, inasmuch as the work could be so easily accomplished. A few mounted men told off as inspectors in each district, would be able to keep the wells sweet, especially if the shafts were provided with covers before the sinking party finished their work. Will it be believed that in a country in which all kinds of marsupials and monster iguanas abound, and where in the summer season no surface water is to be got, the gangs do not take the slightest precaution to keep the drought-stricken animals from drowning themselves in their attempt to get a drink. If Charles Norling had died, would not a strong moral responsibility for his fate have rested upon the Public Works Department?

A WELCOME INTIMATION.

Leaving the Just-in-Time, our next stopping place was at the marked tree at the Glenarring Gorge. In daylight the tree is the clearest of guide posts to the water. A hand, cut in the bark, points in the direction of the Gorge, and the word "water" appears above it. A Chinaman who has been long enough in Australia to pick up a little English, regardful of his new chum countrymen who are not such good linguists, has left a watch-word on the tree in his own tongue, which thoughtful act goes to show that blood is thicker than water, even among the much contemned aliens. By the time that we had lunched and watered the horses, thick black clouds rolled up from the westward, lightning played, and there was every indication that we would be caught in a heavy thunderstorm, for we had no tent, and the nearest shelter was Withnell's station, which it would be impossible to reach until the following day. The only chance—and it was a slender one—of getting a dry camp—a dry camp in a very different sense from that in which we had been accustomed to use the phrase—was that, as the thunderstorms of the North-West are often very local in their range, we might, by driving on rapidly, get outside the area of the coming downpour. The effort was worth making, and starting hurriedly, the horses were put to their best pace, as the sun being shielded by the clouds, they could travel without distress. The next seven miles were almost galloped over, but there was no outrunning the storm. The sky grew

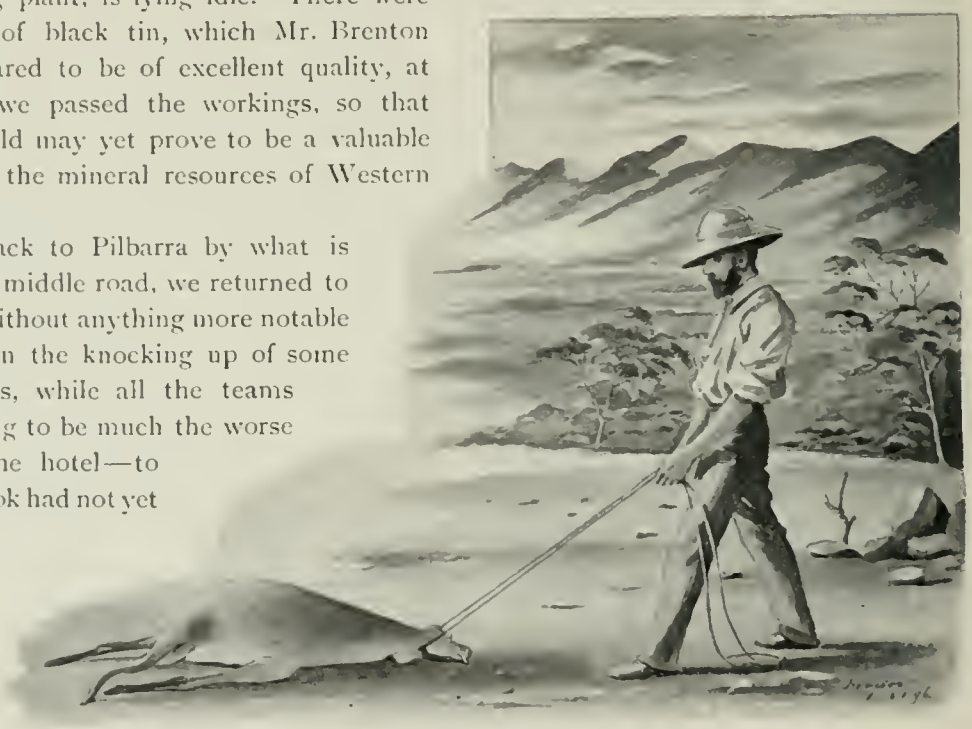
blacker, and soon with a terrific roll of thunder the heavens opened, and a deluge was upon us. In a few moments we were all as wet as seals. It was now twilight, and the prospect, if the rain should continue all night, was a very dispiriting one. Down the hillsides rushed streams of water, flooding the valleys with marvellous rapidity. The horses would not face the blinding sleet; hail stones, as large as marbles, fiercely smote us, but in about half-an-hour the worst of the storm was over, and we made an attempt to go on, but soon found that every gully had become an almost impassable river. The one gleam of satisfaction in our disconsolate plight was that we should be independent of the wells, and relieved of any anxiety on the score of water for the remainder of the journey. After fording one of the storm channels, which nearly took the horses off their legs, camp was made, and stripping to the "buff," we gathered round a large fire to keep ourselves warm, while our clothes were drying. The camp, with the white naked forms gleaming in the ruddy glow of the flames against the pitchy blackness of the surrounding scrub, would have been a grotesque

THE COMING STORM. (Near "The Just-in-Time")

sight to any passer-by. The night happily passed without any more rain, and the morning broke fine; dust had given place to mud, and the thunder had cleared the air, so that for once the drive was quite enjoyable. We soon struck the head of the Black Range, and following it down, we were at the well that had so nearly cost Charles Norling his life, and which we found to be festering with corruption. The air for some distance was poisoned with the stench. The kangaroo, which was the cause of the trouble, could be seen floating in the water, and Mr. Osborne determined, in the interests of the public, to face the disagreeable duty of removing it. He caught the head of the animal in a slip-knot, and hauling on the rope, brought to the surface the bloated carcase, that was almost hairless with decay. The water in the well was as black as ink. We tried to bail the well, but found after taking out a great deal of the water, that we could not spare the time to get it dry.

The Black Range, which extends almost east and west for twenty miles, is all the way fancifully coloured red and black, in the way that I have attempted to describe on an earlier

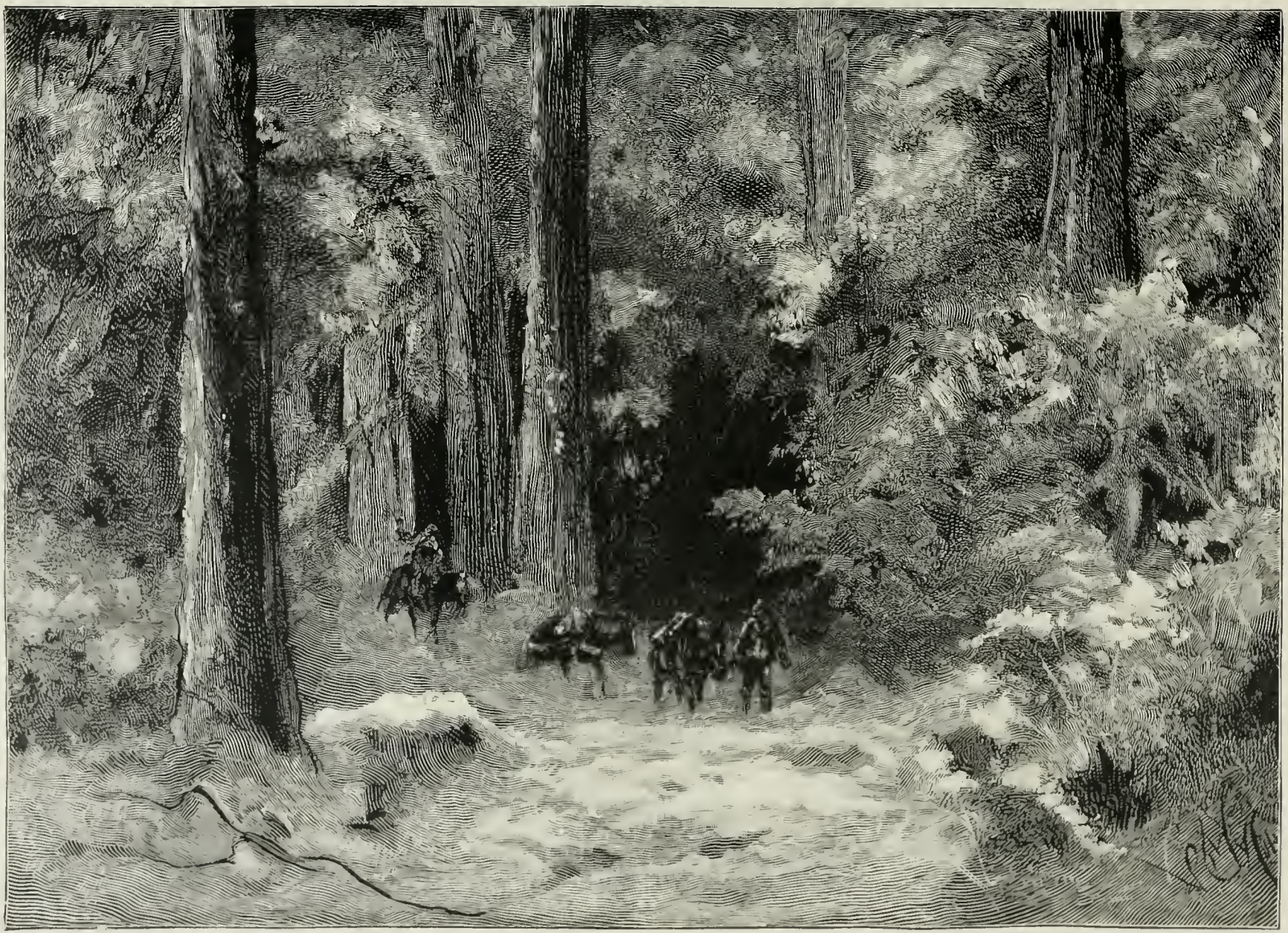
page. On reaching Mr. Withnell's station, we found him well pleased with the improved prospects of the season which the rain had brought, but naturally we did not share in his aspiration that the downpour had lasted all night. In the vicinity of the station we passed what is known as Shaw's Tinfield, where a great deal of excellent ore has been got out, but owing to the excessive cost of carting it to the seaboard, operations have had to be suspended. Nothing but a rich goldfield could stand the strain of the freight of £10 per ton added to the necessarily high price of labour, but the Syndicate which owns the leasehold expects to make a new and prosperous start on the ground, when the Pilbarra railway is made. Meanwhile, a large outlay which they have expended in opening up the lode, and in obtaining a permanent supply of water from a deep well which is equipped with pumping plant, is lying idle. There were several tons of black tin, which Mr. Brenton Symons declared to be of excellent quality, at grass, when we passed the workings, so that Shaw's Tinfield may yet prove to be a valuable factor among the mineral resources of Western Australia.



"BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE THE BLOATED CARCASE."

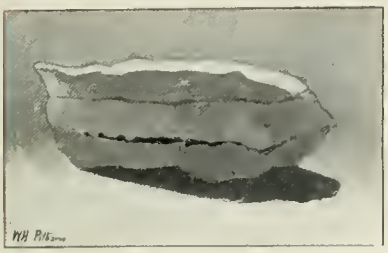
Going back to Pilbarra by what is known as the middle road, we returned to Woodstock without anything more notable occurring than the knocking up of some of the horses, while all the teams were beginning to be much the worse for wear. The hotel—to which Mr. Look had not yet returned from his journey to the coast with Mr. Calvert—was like a banquet hall deserted, after the departure of the Christmas revellers to the mines, for the miner is only to be found leaning over a bar counter on the red letter days of the year; in such a climate he must be abstemious, if he is to be able to do his work. A few teamsters were taking a respite at the hotel before they commenced to clamber up the cliffs on the road to Tambourah Creek, but none of these were able to name the mean thief, who, dishonouring the traditions of the district that it is not necessary to put goods under lock and key in order to protect them from pillage, had broached Mr. Osborne's stock of compressed fodder. Perhaps, however, so far from a corn store, a man will sometimes steal for his horse when he would scorn to pilfer for himself.

The same day we were back at Look's Pool, the scene of melancholy reminiscences of



THE COLONY'S EARLIEST DAYS. III.—IN FOREST DEPTHS.

the most dismal night of the tour. Even with the radiance of a bright afternoon—sun shining upon it—the ugly hole was full of repulsiveness, and the horses sniffed suspiciously at the uninviting water. After only a few minutes stay, we drove away, glad to be quit of the uncanny spot where Mr. Calvert had twice lain in danger of his life. At Mr. Brown's camp at Pilbarra, we began to hear news of the return trip of the chief. He was so weak, we were told, when he reached Pilbarra, that he had to be lifted out of the conveyance, but he had rallied under the careful nursing of Mr. Tom Newland, of the local hotel. In order to get him to the coast with all possible speed, Mr. Hill and Mr. Look had borrowed some of our horses, to replace those which Mr. Look had brought with him. Thus reinforced, the party had made a fresh start, with every prospect of reaching Roebourne within two days, but as there was no telegraphic communication between Roebourne and Pilbarra, the further experiences of the sick man and his companions could only be left to anxious conjecture.



A PIECE OF THE GOLD-BEARING QUARTZ FOUND BY THE CHINAMAN.

The great sensation at Pilbarra during our absence, had, it appeared, been the discovery of a rich reef within five miles of the township, and only two and a half from the main road. The story of the find was a very interesting one, and as it strikingly revives the question of the inferior status under the law of the coloured races, as compared with the whites, the narrative is well worth publishing. A Chinaman, named Ah Ling, who, not being permitted to take out a miner's right, had turned his attention to wood-cutting, came into Newland's Hotel at Pilbarra, carrying something in his shirt, which he evidently set much store upon. The day was very hot, and as the Mongolian had walked about six miles from his camp, he betook himself to the well to have a drink. It was holiday time, and there were a large number of miners about the hotel, who, seeing Ah Ling eyeing them with looks of distrust, had their curiosity aroused to see what was the prize of which he relieved himself while he was drawing water from the well. The parcel was rushed, and it was found to consist of quartz from the cap of a reef, in which gold was showing freely. The miners hastened to get on the heathen's trail and possess themselves of the find, upon which he had so luckily stumbled. The holiday makers, like the guests at Macbeth's feast, stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once from their revelry. They started out upon a chase, in which each man struck his own course, relying upon his knowledge of the country to get first to Ah Ling's camp. Some tried to track him back whence he had come, but the ground was hard, and did not readily betray him. A couple of mates got a

AH LING.

pair of horses into a buggy, and posted down the road as hard as the spinifex-fed steeds could gallop, while others made a wide cast, like a huntsman trying to help the pack to pick up a lost scent. But the most astute harvesters to reap where they had not sown, were a couple of miners, who, reflecting that a race of this kind is not to the swift, but to the keenest eye, looked up their black boy. He—while the coast was clear of all the pursuers, who thought they had made an early start—saw on the stony road footmarks invisible to a European eye, and made a bee line to the broken cap of the reef, easily distancing every rival. By the time that the other white men had got an inkling of its locality, after losing time on false scents, the black boy's boss and his mate had pegged out eighteen acres with the reef in the centre of the ground, and were half way on their road back to make an application before the Warden for the leasehold. While we were at Mr. Brown's camp the rich specimens from the reef were exhibited to us with much jubilation by the pirates, and every miner in the township heartily joined in their laugh against the discomfiture of the yellow man, who had, it transpired, intended to sell his interest in the reef to Mr. Newland, the proprietor of the Pilbarra store, for the modest sum of £10, when his secret was so unluckily discovered. A member of our party ironically suggested to the leaseholders that as they had stolen another's bird nest, they ought to call the mine the Cuckoo, but they replied that in honour of China, and to celebrate the outwitting of the Mongolian, they had named the property the Hong Kong. The outlawry of the coloured races from any rights on a goldfield, is the first article of faith in the creed of every miner, who would regard any man who proposed to relieve the alien of this disability, as an enemy of his country, despite the strong restrictions imposed upon the immigration of Chinese. Only one Asiatic can be brought by a vessel to any part of Australia, for every five hundred tons of her register, so that if the strangers were allowed to hold miners' rights, not many of them would be able to avail themselves of the privilege. I do not think a stronger example of man's inhumanity to man can readily be adduced than the refusal of the leaseholders to give Ah Ling a single penny for his gold. It seems to me that if he had violently revenged himself against them for what must have appeared to him as an act of flagrant robbery, he would not have been outside the pale of sympathy. At any rate, such spoliation is not calculated to give the foreigner cause for believing that his oppressors have any sense of fair play.

AH LING TRACKED.

The supper we had at Pilbarra was a surprise party. In the centre of the table that sweltering evening there was a large dish covered with a napkin, containing what might have been, from the size of it, a baron of beef, big enough to feed a regiment. Mr. Browne, as he bade us be seated, looked as important as if he had been charged with the reading of

the will of a millionaire, who had left us his estates. His eye glistened with a light of triumph, and even the Chinese cook moved round with something of the mien of a royal butler, about to produce some choice vintage at least fifty years old. After we had discussed our mutton and damper, and Mr. Symons was reaching for the jam-pot by way of dessert, Mr. Browne whipped the napkin off the large dish, and there was revealed to our entranced gaze and watering mouths, a splendid melon. Is that all, the reader who lives within reach of a garden may say, with a sneer. Ah! but a water melon in the North-West! The luscious, juicy, red-fleshed gourd, staring us in the face after all our sunburnt dusty pilgrimage, was a delicious sight — a water melon shedding its fragrant odours, and bursting with sweet, pure sap. In the desert it was as a "draught of vintage, that hath been cooled a long age in the deep delved earth, tasting of Flora, and the country green." The wonder was where the generous fruit had come from, for a diamond of the same size would only have taken us a little more by surprise. It was too fresh and speckless to have been carried one thousand five hundred miles from Perth, and it could not have grown among the parched spinifex. While Mr. Browne was tantalizing our piqued curiosity as to where that amazing melon had come from, the cook blurted out, "Ah Moy, he make it grow at Mr. Newland's."

BORROWED PLUMES.

A vegetable garden in Pilbarra at Midsummer, was quite as well worth seeing as a reef. It appeared that the despised alien had laboriously watered a little patch of ground with a bucket from the well. He had raised several melons. Each of them was as a pearl of great price, and it was only as a special mark of generosity and of honour that one of them had been permitted to grace the table of our last supper in the township. We left our many friends of Pilbarra with cordial expressions of the hope that we should have the pleasure of reciprocating their hospitality in a more genial clime than the red swart land of the tropical North-West.

While we had been on the tour, the Government had accepted a tender for a fortnightly mail through Pilbarra. Hitherto the miners had only had a monthly mail. The new contract afforded Mr. Osborne an opportunity of disposing of a number of his extra horses

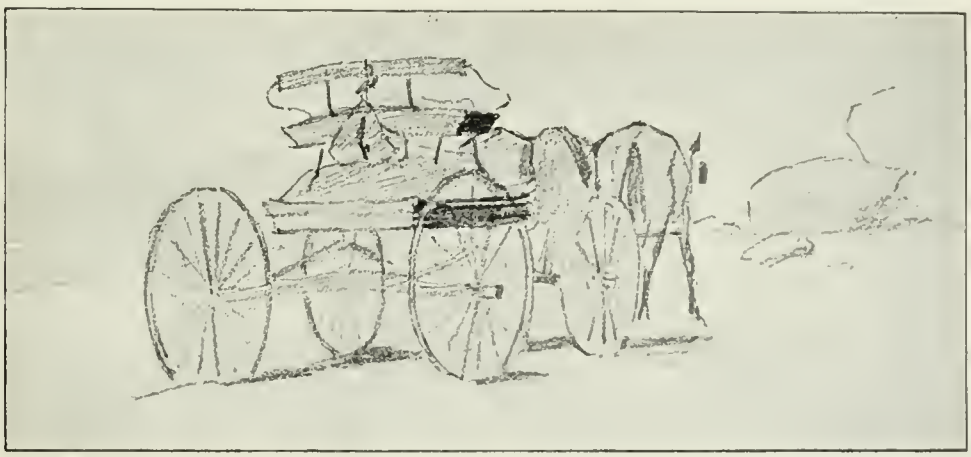
to the firm which took the work in hand. Their teams badly needed reinforcement, as want of food and overwork had worn down a number of the mail horses to the verge of exhaustion, and it would have been impossible for them to have kept to the time table. It had been a painful sight for us to see the emaciated shoulder-galled weeds being cruelly flogged, to keep them struggling on with a heavy waggonette, several passengers, and some hundred-weight of mail bags, over the boulder-strewn river beds, and up the mountain passes. Never have her Majesty's mails looked more shabby, and I doubt whether it has ever been carried under greater difficulties than it was over the North-Western routes, through the long dry summer of last year. The drivers were not to blame; they could not carry more compressed fodder than would give their half-starved jades the shadow of a feed. They had neither the room in the waggonette for more, nor the haulage power for a proper ration, for so long a journey. No excuse would be taken for the late delivery of the letters, except that the rivers were too swollen by floods to be crossed. Needs must when

WATERING THE HORSES AT CHESTAGARRA POOL. (A five minutes' sketch.)

the devil—or a mailman, who is quite as inexorable—drives. The worst of our horses, which we had turned loose with the drover's mob, as being unfit for further service without a spell, looked fat beside the shrunken frames of the mail teams, and it was a great relief to us when Mr. Osborne had made the sale, which enabled some of the postman's broken down beasts to be left behind to recruit, and their places were taken by some of the freshest roadsters of Calvert's party.

The life of a trooper doing escort duty in the North-West, is nearly as unhappy as that of a mail horse. He is in the saddle all the way from Marble Bar to Roebourne, by a devious route nearly three hundred miles long. He is not relieved for an hour, excepting at the camping times of the coach. No time is given him to become seasoned, even if he should have just joined the service, and is on his first trip. The hardiest men and horses suffer from such a task, in a hot, dusty, and fly-infested climate. To call upon a man to

ride three hundred miles on end through such a country, is not a fair thing for any Government to ask him to do. The slow pace of the coach, which the horseman must never leave, is, of course, far more fatiguing than a ride of the same distance at a canter, or a swinging trot. Day after day, from daylight till dark, the trooper, ill-fed, and afflicted with the eternal brown glare of the prostrating sun, jogs on till he must curse the gold discoveries of the West, which have condemned him to such a fate. As tedious as a tired horse, is a proverb that is as well known as it is true. The police horse of the North-West must always be tired, as he has so much to do, and it is on his weary back that the insufferable stretch of escort duty has to be done. In no other district is so much exacted from a member of the police force, but as I have said before, the North-West is too far away for complaints of well-founded grievances to reach the public ear. But that is no excuse for departmental parsimony, that is oppressive to the last degree. But a more humane view of the duty of the mounted escort man could be taken without any extra expense, if the



ONE OF THE BUGGIES.

senior constable who rides on the coach were to be instructed to take turns in the saddle with his subordinate, instead of sitting on the box-seat all the time. Only a rigid stickler for service etiquette would insist upon the present system, by which the senior man is deprived of healthful exercise, and the other is galled and stiff at the journey's end. In the remote contingency of an attack being made upon the coach, it does not appear that the rank-and-file man would not be as useful on the box-seat as his petty officer, or that the senior would make any worse fight of it if he were on horseback. Taking the probabilities of an attack into account, I should say that a better fight was likely to be made against assailants by police who were alert and wide-awake. As it is, a marauding gang would probably find the senior constable nodding to sleep on the coach, tired out by long inactivity, while the over-ridden trooper would have a lot of the activity, if not his courage, taken out of him by the hard work he had done.

Chapter 27.

The Hong Kong Lease—The Government Survey Party—Last Stages—Back at the Sherlock—Racing the Rain—Death of Leonard Calvert—From Roebourne to Cossack—On Board the Tagliaferro—En Route for the South.

By S. H. Whittaker.

PILBARRA

WAS left early on the morning after our arrival there, and we camped for breakfast at the waterhole, which was such an excellent reservoir when we were going up to the Nullagine, but which was now so far exhausted that there was only a little muddy sediment at the bottom of the clay pan. A Government party had just commenced to sink a well a little nearer Pilbarra, just at the foot of the hills, where it will give the horses of travellers and teamsters a much-needed fillip for the last severe tug home. Near the waterhole we saw a number of turkeys, which are very fond of feeding on the rich grass flat around the water, but we had not time to try to get within shot from one of the buggies. During breakfast the owners of the Hong Kong reef rode up. They had been visiting their ground, and they were highly pleased with it. They pressed Mr. Brenton Symons to go and inspect it, but he was reluctantly compelled to decline the invitation, as it was necessary for us to hurry on if we were to catch the steamer *Albany*, at Cossack, on the 10th of the month. As the Hong Kong Mine has such an unique history, it may be interesting to quote from the *West Australian*, of the 20th March—nearly three months later than the date of our visit—a report concerning the reef, and the progress that had been made with its development. The paper says:—"Encouraging reports are to hand concerning the reefs of the Hong Kong, near Pilbarra. On the Hong Kong lease the reef has been followed down on the underlay 20 ft. The stone at that depth is equal to the richest of that which was obtained on the surface, but much more mineralised. There are twenty-five tons of stone at grass. As soon as fifty tons are stoped out, it is the intention of the owners to cart this quantity to the Roebourne

After the wallaby, on the Black Range, Nor'-West.

Gold Mining Company's battery at Pilbarra, and have it treated." The following interesting items also appear in the same issue of the *West Australian*:—"Under the heading of 'Encouraging Reports from the North-West Mines,' it is stated: 'A small parcel of stone from the Eldorado Mine on the Shaw River, was treated at the Ironclad battery, and yielded between 7 ozs. and 8 ozs. to the ton.

'Exceptionally rich stone has been struck at the 166 ft. level, in the White Angel Mine, at Marble Bar.

'Machinery for the Western Shaw Gold Mining Company has reached the fields. The teamsters who brought it have experienced great difficulty in travelling, owing to the boggy state of the roads, caused by the recent heavy rain.

'A miner named Larry Keohane, arrived from Marble Bar on Monday night with two specimens, one weighing six-and-a-half pounds, and the other smaller, which he found on the Day Dawn property, at Talga Talga. The specimens are estimated to contain 70 ozs. of pure gold.'"

IN THE BUSH.

Between Pilbarra and Mallina we came upon the Government survey party, who have surveyed the proposed line from Marble Bar to Roebourne, in order that full data may be supplied as to whether the railway should take that route, or from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. The party was a very large one, and thoroughly well equipped; they were pushing on at the rate of more than two miles per day. In all, there were about twenty men employed by the officer in charge, and the work they expected to have completed in three weeks from the date of which we speak. The line marked out avoided the hills as much as possible, even though there were some detours, in order to keep to the valleys and the coach road, along which the line runs at intervals. The surveyed route is comparatively free from engineering difficulties, although it is sure to be a far more costly one than either the Murchison or the Coolgardie railway. The baggage waggon had, however, gone over every yard of the track, which shows that it is a tolerably easy one. There is supposed to be a great deal of rivalry as to whether the starting point of the railway shall be Roebourne or Port Hedland, but the controversy does not appear to have waxed very warm, if we are to judge from the following statement, which has recently appeared in a Perth newspaper:—"All efforts to convene a public meeting at Marble Bar, to further discuss the matter of urging the Government to accept the railway route from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, have proved futile, owing to the want of enthusiasm on the question shown by the townspeople."

On arriving at Mallina late on the afternoon of the 9th of January, some bad news awaited us. Leonard Calvert, we heard, was seriously, if not dangerously ill, and Mr. Albert F. Calvert had, on his arrival at Roebourne, been found to be suffering so severely from sunstroke, that he had, under medical advice, been taken to the south by the SS. *Sultan*. How we should get there in time to meet the R.M.SS. *Australia*, at Albany, on the 2nd of February, seemed to be extremely doubtful, as Mr. Roe wrote to say that the SS. *Albany* had anticipated her contract time, and had left Cossack on the 8th inst. Our only chance of getting down the coast without having to wait three weeks, was that Mr. Roe would be able to get the *Tagliaferro*, which was loading cattle at Derby, to call in at Cossack, on her way to Fremantle. As the *Tagliaferro* could not arrive for a few days, and the horses had been rather hardly pushed in anticipation of our being able to catch the *Albany*, Mr. Osborne resolved to go more slowly for the remainder of the way.

MR. BRENTON SYMONS, M.I.C.E.

The next day's stage to the Sherlock was a very dragging one, as the horses which had now carried us seven hundred miles into the interior, were getting done up. Every few miles a change had to be made of a poler or a leader, who hung back in the traces in spite of the whip. There was not much to choose between the spare horses, which young Jack had in charge, and it was evident that owing to the mishaps of the road, we should be lucky if we just managed to reach Roebourne. Mr. Osborne would have been even worse off, if he had not had the good fortune to borrow from a teamster at Roebourne, Woodstock, a grey gelding that nobly did credit to his dash of Arab blood. The horse was only "grass fed," ragged, and unshod, but the teamster had promised that he would want to pull all the load himself. This was high praise, but the half-bred Arab proved to be a veritable steam engine. Day after day he pulled his driver's arms out of their sockets, and even when his hoofs were worn down to the quick, and his bones were showing all over, he would not hear the crack of the whip without trying to jump out of the harness. A little mare that Mr. Osborne picked up on the road, also did splendid work when the pinch came. She was only a handful, and had been ridden to something a little better than a shadow before she was hitched up to the coach, but she did more than a big horse's

work. From Sherlock into Roebourne she was never out of harness. In the last couple of miles, on a boggy road, she was nearly dropping, but on the macadam she pulled herself together, and galloped up the main street and into the yard of the Jubilee Hotel, with a spirit that was strong though the flesh was weak.

We just got to the Sherlock in time to escape a wetting, that had been threatening all day. On coming in sight of the homestead, it was apparent that a disaster had occurred there since our last visit. The coach-house, barn, and stables had been swept away by fire. Mr. Meares told us that the fire had spread so suddenly, while a high wind was blowing, that nothing could be done to save anything; buggies, harness, corn, and Mr. Osborne's compressed fodder, had all been consumed in less than half-an-hour. The cause of the fire had never been discovered.

BUSH FIRES, FROM WILD DOG CAMP.

It was worse news that Leonard Calvert, the bright companion, who had been a general favourite during the early part of the tour, had grown weaker. The message which Mr. Roe had sent out to meet us at the Sherlock, did not speak of the boy's life being in danger, but it seemed to be an augury of death. Heavy rain fell steadily all that night, and in the morning the Roebourne plains were almost under water. A leaden sky threatened a wet ride, which was sure to be a very slow one, owing to the miry road, and the fact that the tired horses had, owing to the occurrence of the fire at the Sherlock station, missed their usual feeds of corn. The wheels of the coaches sank deeply in the chocolate soil of the plains, and horse after horse made his last effort, and had to be taken out. The odds would have been greatly against us getting any further than Roebourne, if that town had not been our destination. The unlooked-for disabilities of the trip had used up all Mr. Osborne's reserve forces; if, with less thoughtfulness, he had not provided a good margin for contingencies, we should never have got through to time. We just managed to outrun the rain, in reaching Roebourne. The horses had hardly been unharnessed before the heavens opened, and a deluge descended. In the morning the Harding was roaring like the cataract of Niagara; portions of the tramway were swept away, and the drought in the North-West had effectually broken up. If we had been a day later in getting home, the

way would have been blocked by the floods. The rain was the heaviest that had fallen for years, and if no more rain should fall this season, the country could not become as dry again for two years as it was when we passed through it.

On entering Roebourne, Mr. Osborne drove to Mr. Roe's house to enquire for Leonard Calvert. The blinds were down, and the place looked very quiet and deserted. The housekeeper came out, and we saw the worst in her face. "The little fellow died this morning," she said in a broken voice, "and they are burying him now." At that moment the church bell began to toll its solemn knell for the dead. The funeral service was being read in that lonely cemetery, far from the boy's home and kindred. The next day Mr. Roe told us of the fortitude with which the lad had borne acute suffering, and of the unremitting care of his nurses. Among the kindly acts in which many of the people of Roebourne had sought to share, the exertions of the SS. *Sultan*, on behalf of the patient, had been conspicuous. Captain Pitts had set an ice-making machine in motion with his engines, in order to try and allay the fever, and had even delayed the departure of his boat to the latest possible moment, in order to leave a supply of ice for the sick boy's use. Mr. Roe himself had been unremitting in his attention, and had stayed up night after night to watch by his bedside, as the lad had manifested a strong inclination to be in the company of his friend. Mr. Roe gave warm praise to the orderly of the Roebourne Hospital and his assistant, who had been engaged to nurse the patient, as soon as his illness took a serious turn. It was the opinion of his medical attendant that had the weather been a little cooler, he would have pulled through. The excessively hot day's experience while we were at Mallina, had been his death warrant, the same day on which Mr. Albert F. Calvert had received the sunstroke, which had compelled him to leave us at Woodstock.

MR. W. POLLARD HARRIS.

The date of our departure from the North-West remained in suspense through two days. Mr. Roe had obtained a promise that the *Tagliaferro* would call, weather permitting, but now that the fine weather had broken up, the chances were that the steamer would have to consult her safety, by giving Cossack a wide berth on the way down to Fremantle from Derby. The captain had not only to consider the interests of his ship, but also the charterers, who had put a valuable lot of bullocks on board for the meat supply of Perth and Fremantle, and who were naturally anxious to land them as soon as possible, as every

day's delay means loss of condition to the beasts, who pine in their unwonted captivity, after having roamed from the day of their birth, as free as the air, over the unfenced tracts of the enormous pasture grounds. The Cossack agent of the boat wired to us to go to the port, so as to be in readiness to go on board, if the Fates should be so propitious as to enable the steamer to put in an appearance.

Mr. Roe went with us to Cossack. The time had come for us to say good-bye to Mr. Osborne, whom we all held in high regard, not only for his excellent generalship, but for the spirit of *camaraderie* which he had uniformly exhibited, all through what had been to him a very trying post of great responsibility. As I have indicated in a previous chapter, Mr. Osborne was eminently fitted for the work which he so successfully carried through, and every member of the party will always gratefully remember his foresight and his capabilities for command, not less than his genial qualities in social life. On the tram-ride to Roebourne, the stupendous force and volume of the storm waters was strikingly exhibited in the washways along the line. The gaps were so numerous that the passengers had to leave the cars half-a-dozen times, and push them across the rails, which were suspended in mid-air, over chasms from ten to fifteen feet wide, where the water had made its own outlet.

ABORIGINALS DANCING.

The next morning at dawn the lighthouse signalled the arrival of a steamer, and with light hearts we hurried down to the waterside, expecting to be taken aboard the *Tagliaferro;* but just as the boat was putting off another signal was made, indicating that the steamer had come from Fremantle, not from Derby. The *Tagliaferro,* then it seemed, had gone by, and we were doomed to remain at Cossack for at least three weeks. We felt almost as miserable as shipwrecked sailors, who see a sail pass from their sight, for Cossack is a hateful place for an idler to be in. But happily, the dismal prospect was not realised. Just as we had abandoned all hope of getting to the south in time to see Mr. Calvert again, prior to his departure for London, the shipping agent sped into our hotel with the joyful tidings that the *Tagliaferro* was in sight. The weather had cleared at the critical moment. The wind was lulling and the clouds disappearing, while the steamer was coming abreast of the lighthouse, and the captain, who had made up his mind to go by, was induced to make a hasty call at the port, which to us was a place of horrible banishment. We were very quickly aboard, and no time was lost in getting up steam for Fremantle.

The *Tagliaferro* was not a very sweet boat; she had too many cattle on board to be

delectable to passengers, but to us, flushed with a sense of deliverance, she was the pink of perfection. She was as slow as she was dirty, and she was quite out of grog, but it was delightful to travel in her, instead of being immured for the better part of a month at Cossack. The captain gave us an interesting account of his experiences on the coast in the cattle trade. The *Tagliaferro* had been chartered for twelve months to bring butchers' supplies from the North-West, to compete against the importers from the other Colonies, which the large influx of population into Western Australia had rendered necessary. The steamer carried about two hundred head on each trip, and all the time she had been in the trade her losses had not amounted to more than about three per cent. The cattle, which are always very wild, are run aboard in the cool of the morning, in order to prevent them being over heated. From a yard alongside the jetty, they are driven over high-walled gangways on to the different decks, and are made secure behind heavy bolts and beams, upon the strength of which the safety of the ship depends.

A TIN OF SALMON.

The meat supply of Western Australia is one of the "burning questions" in and out of Parliament. A joint costs more here than it does even in England; and all classes of the community, except the pastoralists, chafe against the stock tax, which is an intolerable burden, yet the Colony is so badly off for pasture lands that it can never hope to raise the flocks and herds which are required to feed the people. Broadly speaking, the only cattle districts are to be found in the Kimberley district, and even there, I have the authority of Mr. Alexander Forrest for saying, that squatting is not a sufficiently profitable enterprise to enable the owners of runs to stand in a strong position with the lenders of the money, which they have spent upon the improvement of their properties. On the day that

A HOUSE IN ROEBOURNE.

these lines were written, Mr. Charles Harper, hon. member for Beverley, moved for and obtained a Select Committee, to enquire as to the best means of enabling meat to be sold at a reasonable price, and in the course of the discussion Mr. Forrest told a member who was attacking the stock tax, that he (Mr. Forrest) would make over his station property in the North-West to anyone who would relieve him of financial responsibility in regard to it. He contended that the tax of thirty shillings per head on meat cattle ought not to be removed, as it was the only thing that prevented the local grazier from being crushed by his inter-colonial rival.

The captain of the *Tagliaferro* greatly deplores the ill-lighted state of the coast between Geraldton and Derby, which leaves the mariner at the mercy of favouring chances, and his local knowledge to steer clear of the shoals and sunken reefs, which have strewn these waters with wrecks. In this, as in other respects, the Colony has had too large an area to watch over, in proportion to its means and population, the result being that the coasting vessels have had to take the "risks of the road," much in the same way that an isolated settler in the bush cannot expect to enjoy the well kept highways of a townsman. The ship-masters of the North-Western seaboard, therefore, rely more upon their own prudence and familiarity with the intricacies of the course, which they mark out, than on charts and beacons. They make up by increased watchfulness, and long and anxious hours on duty, for the fewness of the landmarks; and year after year, safely get in and out of the ports of Sharks' Bay, Onslow, Carnarvon, and Derby, which would be full of pitfalls to navigators who had not acquired a skill in this particular school of experience. Now that the Colony is growing so rapidly in wealth and population, there is no doubt that the better lighting of the coast will be taken in hand.

A LETTER HOME.

On the evening of the sixth day after we had embarked at Cossack, the *Tagliaferro* was warped up to the town pier at the cattle jetty, at Fremantle, and the record trip of Calvert's party through the goldfields of the Golden West was over. It was a record trip in the extent of country which had been traversed in the six weeks devoted to it, in the special

organization required to accomplish the journey, and I fear not less unique and lavish expenditure which the special train and coach services entailed. But the object which Mr. Albert F. Calvert had set before him, had been accomplished with the completeness which has uniformly characterised his enterprises. In the short time which he could spare from his many and onerous engagements in Great Britain, he had resolved to see for himself the developments of the Goldfields of Western Australia, which have so marvellously expanded within the last twelve months. There were, as this narrative shows, many difficulties in the carrying out of this arduous and self-imposed task, but they all gave way to an indomitable will, organising power, and a long purse. The whole of the extensive arrangements, in spite of the remoteness of the country to be traversed, the midsummer heat of tropical latitudes, and the difficuly of getting stores, fodder, and equipment, had been carried out with the regularity and the punctuality of clockwork, with the result that Mr. Calvert, Mr. Graham Hill, and Mr. Brenton Symons, left for London by the R.M.SS. *Australia*, on the date that had been appointed in London months before.

SHY.

LOST.

Chapter 28.

A Little Blow-up on the Swan.

Full, True, and Particular Account of the Same.

By Walker Hodgson.

THE *Ivy* was not by any means the most elegant steam launch on the Swan, but what she lacked in beauty of form she made up—with a good deal of noise—in self-assertion. There was a slight hint of this forward characteristic of the *Ivy* in the obtrusiveness of her funnel. Our illustration will indicate this. There was, we thought, too much funnel to allow of due appreciation regarding her remaining proportions. However, we are not on this account going to "blow-up" the *Ivy*, since, as will shortly be seen, she was ready and willing enough to do that herself.

The *Ivy* had just been renovated. She had needed it for a long time, and had been made smart at last, which condition may account for the self-assertion alluded to. We have heard of more intelligent creatures than steam launches laying in stock of a like nature when the tailor or the milliner sends the new things round—in spite of the accompanying bill.

THE LAUNCH "IVY," AT THE JETTY.

Well, the *Ivy* was quite smart outside, and was fitted with a new engine inside—an American kerosene oil arrangement, which

prophecy affirmed would cause her propeller to do great things in the way of speed. The deck of the launch was laid with linoleum of a striking pattern, while her seating accommodation was brave in marbled oilcloth. With all her finery, therefore, and the new kerosene power, she was about to make a trial trip from her mooring in Freshwater Bay to Fremantle. The *Ivy* belonged to Osborne Hotel, where we were staying for a few days—before proceeding to Albany to join Mr. Calvert and Mr. Graham Hill for the voyage to England—and we were invited by her engineer and her skipper to step on board and "do" the trip with them. This we agreed to readily enough, little knowing till later on how dangerously *Ivy* fancied herself in her new dress. So we descended the two hundred and seventy zig-zag stairs leading down the side of the cliff from the rear of the hotel, and joined our friends "the crew." There was a little fellow fishing on the jetty, and our genial skipper invited him also to join, but he shook his head, and smiling "No, thanks," turned his back upon us. Perhaps he felt a bite at that moment, and, from what we know of piscatorial enthusiasm, it would require much more than a trip on a steam launch to entice an angler from the feel of a bite. We do not desire it to be understood that we got away expeditiously from the jetty and our little fishing friend. The kerosene was not at all eager, and it was fully two hours before the propeller announced, by a lazy sort of revolution, that we were moving.

THE ENGINEER.

THE SKIPPER.

Freshwater Bay and the river thereabout is as fine a water for boating and yachting as you need desire, while for the eye there is much beauty in the surroundings—the views from the high tower of Osborne, over to the distant Darling Range, and to Fremantle and the sea, being particularly grand. Bush fires, too, are characteristic of the scenery, and tell, in this neighbourhood at any rate, of the advent of the white man and his clearing operations, and his—saying insulting things to the flies. As we descended the stairs before-mentioned there were three fires smoking in the middle distance. Having got fairly away, going, that is, at perhaps a rapid walking rate, our skipper proposed that we should make an inspection of an aboriginal cave "over yonder in Peppermint Grove." This we did, and it was just as well that we tarried there awhile, for *Ivy* was sorely needing a spell in order to get steam up again. She was not *quite* ready, in fact, when we thought of proceeding. The next object of interest towards which we steered was upon the opposite side of the reach—a mile away maybe. This was certainly a curio to us, remembering we were in Australia—

for it was nothing less novel than *a ruin*. True there was no moss or ivy about it, or we would write and tell Mr. Max O'Rell of the find: still, it was a real grey ruin, and an

IN FRESHWATER BAY.

BUSH FIRES.

interesting "human document." It is situated midway between Perth and Fremantle, and was the only house of call for traffickers on the river long before the present railway was

laid down. We viewed this rarity without landing, and referring to *Ivy*, found she had "80 lbs. on," and was prepared to steam ahead. Pretty villas here and there peep out from the foliage on the banks of the stream—estates purchased for the proverbial song, but what worth now we wonder, and at what rate rising in value? Let us attend to *Ivy* and her crew, however. We were steaming at six knots now, and only once had the skipper to get out and push! This was on account of a sandbank that took advantage of *Ivy* when her friends had forgotten her helm, and transferred their interest to sandwiches and half a kerosene tinful of water. We had a tumbler when the voyage began, but someone sat upon it in the course of the trip. You can, however, take a much longer "pull" from a kerosene tin, and that is something to appreciate in the thirsty Antipodes.

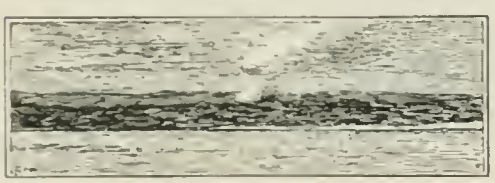
ABORIGINAL CAVE, SWAN RIVER.

It was when we were crossing Rocky Bay, *en route* to the famous quarries of the Swan River Settlement, that it took the man at the wheel, or, rather, cord, all attention to keep clear of the numerous shoals and sandbanks; indeed, matters would have gone amiss with us earlier than they did had it not been for the constant use of the boat-hook and careful inspection of the river bed.

HOUSE BOAT ON THE SWAN.

From the quarries, in which many of Britain's expert sinners laboured long ago, the stone is now being taken for the new breakwater at Fremantle. From here it is perhaps a mile to the well-known bridge designed by a convict, and altogether built by his fellows in forced exile. There was a good deal of "full speed ahead" and "astern" before we came to a suitable mooring for the *Ivy*, who, having reached the bridge, had gained her outward port, but we finally made fast immediately beneath the great wooden structure of the convict days.

A number of chubby and much freckled Colonial children were playing about an old overturned boat—like Mr. Peggotty's residence (without the chimney)—and two or three lads were stripping on the little wharf in order to take "the cool of the evening" (it was now six o'clock) in the water.



A BUSH FIRE NEAR FREMANTLE.

We all landed, and made haste to the nearest cool drink saloon, for the kerosene tin had been empty some time. Within an hour we returned leisurely, and the engineer proceeded to get steam up. By this time there were

quite twenty youths diving and bathing near, and one boy had seated himself on the prow of the launch to take detailed stock of us. And now it was that the *Ivy* made a to-do. Perhaps she resented being left alone, and so was in ill-humour. Anyhow, when we were just about to start, homeward bound, and were taking in the cable, she gave a loud report—a mixture of thud and bang—which made the bathers—rosy with their exertions in the water—turn pale, and the launch's crew and guests probably paler still. The former scrambled out of the river with scared faces, and the latter very earnestly got away from the neighbourhood of the engine, with greater speed than a gutter *gamin* would make to outrun a policeman.

VIEW NEAR THE QUARRIES.

The expression on the countenance of the boy on the prow was a sight to be remembered, the skipper told us later, and he laughed long and heartily about it many times before we reached the home jetty again. No doubt he will have the picture still in his merry eye, and being reminded of it by this little record, will laugh once more. But the result was much more disastrous than the report. The most vital pipe in the engine's mechanism had burst, and a side of the engine itself was blown clean out. The engineer might have been seriously hurt. He had just crouched down, and with much satisfaction become aware that *Ivy* was worth 80 lbs., but before he had time to rise and express the fact, the accident happened, so that when next we looked upon him his face and hands exhibited numerous wounds and much grime.

THE BOY ON THE PROW.

What was to be done? We could abandon the self-assertive *Ivy*, and return to Claremont (the station for Osborne) by train, but this was scarcely heroic enough for two Englishmen, one Scotchman (the skipper), and one Colonial (the engineer)! The latter turned out to be the hero of the situation (perhaps our looks appealed to him for a sign of his mechanical genius), and promptly indicated his line of action. One of us was to remain in charge of the craft while he, with the others, would go in search of a

Fremantle plumber. The short Australian twilight had died away when we set forth with the disabled portion of the launch's engine to find a fitting shop.

After a considerable walk we found such a place with ease, but met a difficulty at the same time. The plumber's daughter was quite sure we might use the shop in order to heal the wounds inflicted by the suicidally-inclined *Ivy*, but first we must secure the key to the hospital, and the key was in the pocket of her father, who at this time in the evening was taking his ease "somewhere in the town."

Unable to get anything more definite than *somewhere*, we went after the key. We visited the billiard saloons and the bars, and re-visited them. Our engineer, who was personally acquainted with this particular tradesman, "kept his eyes open" in the streets, and looked into all the shops yet open. For two hours we searched, and twice in passing the plumber's house had called there again, hoping to find him returned. Still, no plumber—no key.

OUR SKIPPER.

"Our friend in the launch must think we're bushed," the skipper suggested.

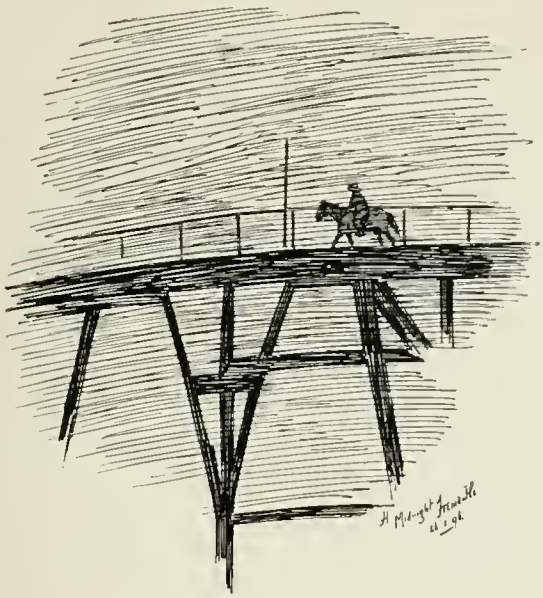
"And so we are, in a way," said the engineer. "We can't get the key to the road out; but *he'll* have been dining at Osborne long before this I should fancy."

We found the key, however, at our third (and it was to have been our last) call at the plumber's house, and the tradesman very readily gave our engineer the freedom of his bench, new piping, files, vice, and soldering irons.

Sturdily and steadily our friend worked for a couple of hours, when all was ready, and we left for the launch, carrying the "doctored" part, without which the *Ivy* could not help us home.

A late coffee-stall, however, attracted us on the way to the river. Here were sausages and mashed potatoes, and pork pies—and we were hungry. The stall-holder was doing brisk business when we approached as customers. It was a "well-found" concern—

to us at this time of night, in another sense than that of being amply provisioned—and we set to with appetite.

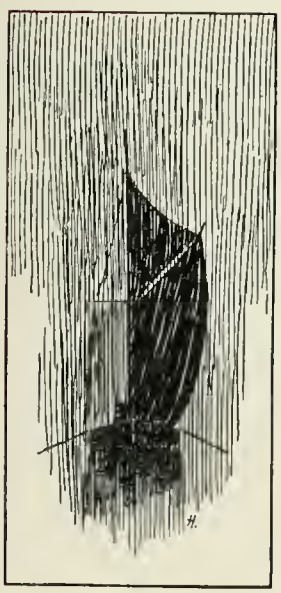


A BIT OF THE OLD CONVICT BRIDGE.

Now, all the opprobrious terms our little party could think of had been called upon and used so often in connection with *Ivy's* blow-up, that any suggestion of an unapplied word of reproach was likely to "catch on" with us, in case *Ivy* was still disinclined to be good. Such a word was freely given us while we stood at the coffee-stall.

There came across the broad, dusty street, out of the darkness, with a swaying motion, indicative of recent "cups," an old man in a hat with a very wide brim, and a voice of thick utterance.

"*Who* called me a lag?" he asked, drawing up to the *Ivy* trio, and casting dazed eyes upon each in turn. "*Who* called me a lag?"



THE LUGGER.

This word "lag" had not occurred to us for application to the launch's treatment of herself and us, or it would have been cast at her no doubt with frequency. The epithet is a relic of the old convict days, and is supposed to have a good deal of sting about it. It *means* a convict, or one who has been a convict. We suppose it could not be used now with much effect, since it could not carry veracity with it. There are no convicts now, and the erstwhile representatives of the Swan River Settlement must have gone with the years. Still, the word is commonly

A LATE COFFEE-STALL KEEPER.

used — we have heard it used all over the Colony — and our inebriated interrogator had made up his mind that one of us had called him a "lag." We need scarcely say his surmise — expressed with whisky fumes — was a long way out, but so little did *he* believe this, that he removed his coat in order to try conclusions in a bout of fisticuffs. He very nearly struck the first blow. But not quite, for our skipper got him neatly by the neck and a lower region, and ran him back into the gloom, where he left him in a recumbent attitude, with every opportunity to finish the night in a survey of the southern constellations.

PETER.

Having finished our coffee, we returned to the river, and as soon as the white hull of *Ivy* appeared in the moonlight over the wharf, the engineer exclaimed with meaning in his voice, "You old lag!"

The fitting operation was quite successful, and in the course of an hour the launch moved out into the broad channel of the Swan to the clatter of a horseman high up on the old convict bridge.

Of course, we had not found our friend in charge. *He* had taken the last train to Claremont, and had had late—very late—dinner, but he had left us the following note pinned on the chain locker door:—

"Blown-up launch *Ivy*, 10 p.m

"Dear comrades, please observe I'm off, I cannot 'linger longer;'
Fremantle has attractions, true, but Osborne has 'em stronger—
While it has just occurred to me (don't take the thought amiss)
That you have said 'the launch be *blown*,' and hooked it home by this."

He told us next day that, while waiting in the launch, lying upon the marbled seat, most heartily wishing for something to turn up, a pair of lovers turned up, and a proposal of marriage was made just over his head.

Moderate speed now served us, on account of the uncertain light, but for five knots good steaming was done, though just after rounding Rocky Bay we nearly collided with a stone-laden lugger. She was being towed over the river from the quarries by a small boat. The "measured beat and slow" of a pair of oars was the first indication we had of her presence.

"Hi, hi, there; look out!" sang our skipper.

"Nay, look out *you*," replied the lugger pilot; and so we had to do, by stopping *Ivy* as soon as possible, and using the poles to keep her away from the obstruction.

THE LAUNDRESS.

But our troubles began again after five knots were completed. It was a time of continually getting out to push. *Ivy* was all that could be desired now in her steam equipment, but whenever we tried to use it we ran aground, so that for long it was very slow going indeed, and when at last we got into deep water it was so dark that we had not

the least idea of the locality. We decided to wait for dawn, therefore, and we waited, telling yarns and eating sandwiches (which we had procured at the coffee-stall), and—keeping a respectful distance from the kerosene engine.

THE COOK LOOKED OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE.

Most certainly we were bushed on the Swan, but when the light came we found ourselves in luck. We were within a hundred yards of the Osborne jetty at the foot of the zig-zag stairs.

It was about half-past four when we parted. The skipper and the engineer branched off to their respective houses, and the remaining guest returned to the hotel, which he found he could not enter in the usual way at that hour. So he ascended to the tower from the outside, and there remained until Peter, an Indian waiter, who was generally about very early, should open one of the doors and smile his own Bengalese smile, and ask all about it. For by the *returned* guest the *Ivy*'s little blow-up at Fremantle had been described to the Osborne folk, while the *bushed* guest was somewhat of a curio at breakfast time. Peter told the laundress, and the laundress told the cook, who looked at us out of the corner of his eye in passing his domain, and we found out—for one day in our lives, at any rate—what it is like to be "noticed."

A REACH ON THE SWAN RIVER.

Chapter 29.

A Few Notes Homeward Bound.

By Walker Hodgson.

IT was at Albany that our sometime divided party met again for the voyage to England. Mr. Calvert, who had been in the Eastern Colonies with Mr. Graham Hill, was now thoroughly restored to health. The last time we had seen him was when he lay prostrate in the desert of the North-West. Now, as he bade good-bye to Sir Joseph Renals and other friends on the jetty at Albany, he appeared as well as ever. Our genial Osborne host, Mr. W. T. Astley, had journeyed with us—Mr. Symons, Mr. Tooth, and the writer—from Perth, to transact business with our chief, and he and Mr. S. H. Whittaker, the correspondent, were the last familiars to whom we recollect giving a parting salute as at mid-day, February 3rd, the fine P. and O. ship *Australia* steamed out of King George's Sound. At seven in the evening the last of the land, Cape Leeuwin, had become the dimmest grey rim betwixt sky and sea, and was soon altogether lost in the rapidly-falling shades of night.

THE HON. MRS. NORTH.

R.M.S. "AUSTRALIA" APPROACHING SUEZ.

All the traders at Colombo and Aden, and other ports of call, who throng the homeward-bound ship from the Great South Land, seem to have fully made up their minds that you have unlimited means for the purchase of their merchandise—jewellery (made in Birmingham, "knowing" voyagers tell you), photographs, sandalwood boxes, lace, silks, cigarettes, feathers, and so on. Perhaps you have, but, finding it difficult to deal with so many importunate "tambies," you get impatient, and endeavour to make it plain to them that you are going home cashless. Still, they are most persevering gentlemen. The tawny divers do their best, too, to draw your attention to them, advertising their performance by frequent repetitions of that tremendous classic—Oh! so reminiscent of home—"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay." The very blind and mal-

SIR JOSEPH RENALS, BART.

formed beggars in the byways ashore, apparently think that your feet have of late been treading in fortune-leading tracks *somewhere* in *Terra Australis*, and appeal vehemently for a dole from your overflowing funds.

Ashore at Aden, a little party of the *Australia*'s passengers were followed *all day* by a feather merchant of, we should imagine, really fine parts as a trader. He had a most insinuating smile, too, and made eloquent use of it by giving it a dash of contempt whenever it was suggested to him that the party's exchequer was exhausted.

"You haf com' from Australee!" he was for ever reminding us as he trotted—with the usual mob of Arab urchins—at our heels. Our portrait shows him just after one of these "reminders."

FROM NEW ZEALAND.

The urchins, in their appeals for backsheesh, generally state that they are orphans, so generally indeed, that the traveller may be excused for the fancy that they are mostly fibbing. But when it comes to an ancient inhabitant (like the conventional patriarch in a Biblical illustration) pointing out to you that he is without father and mother, the traveller may be forgiven for taking him by his patriarchal beard, and gazing into his wrinkled patriarchal countenance, and calling him a patriarchal centenarian of a sinner. Such an old gentleman informed *us* (with outstretched hand for the expected backsheesh), that he had "no father, no mother," whereupon a member of our group took him a little apart, and entered into his parentless case fully and *seriously*, telling him that at his time of life it was an awful crime to be guilty of, and that in the absence of his papa and mamma, he really ought to be a better boy. It was this same companion of ours who, in

"YOU HAF COM' FROM AUSTRALEE."

BEGGARS ALL.

passing through the Suez Canal later on, thought he would take up a goodly portion of Egypt, and start a sandpaper factory there.

A NOTE AT ADEN.

The crowds of pedlars who over-run the vessel at the various ports, it is asserted, have many thieves among them. For this reason, we suppose, it was that one of the quartermasters stationed himself at the head of the gangway to keep back most of them. From those he *did* allow a "market pitch" on deck he took toll at the rate of a feather each; and we should think he collected as many as will serve his female relations at home, however numerous, for many ostrich-feather fashion seasons.

Leaving Aden, you lose the Southern Cross at night. This is not such a violent loss as some folk would have you fancy. What says our friend "Ironbark" about it? Hear him—

"We have been personally and intimately acquainted with the Southern Cross for many years, and can at least say that he never imposed upon us; never dazzled us—not one solitary dazzle—nor impressed us half as much as our first soldier-ant bite did. Most people, at least, expect to see the Southern Cross in an upright position, but, as a matter of fact, it is mostly seen lying on its side, as if it were too sick or too tired to stand up. Occasionally it stands on its head, but this is pure eccentricity, done probably for variety, or with the deliberate intention of looking as little like a respectable cross as it can. We would willingly find extenuating circumstances if we could for the short-comings of this afflicted constellation, but none for its fawning sychophants, who have deliberately dragged it from the obscurity in which it would otherwise have remained, and have persistently advertised it as though it was the very Pears'

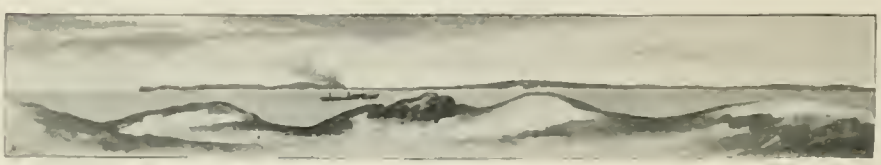
MR. W. T. ASTLEY.

A CATAMARAN.

Soap of the firmament, or a kind of luminous Cockle's Pills. No, we have no personal grudge against it, no decided objection to the cross itself, except, perhaps, on moral grounds. There is not the least doubt that it is responsible for almost as many impromptu

AT COLOMBO.
"The spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle"

flirtations as the moon herself, and many a weary brother bears the still heavier cross of matrimony this day, who can trace the beginning of his trouble to somebody's amiable



NEARING SUEZ.

suggestion that he should "step out on the balcony, and point it out to her." So, becoming aware that our leaving Aden meant leaving the Southern Cross behind us, we took heart of grace, and a peep into "Ironbark Chips and Stockwhip Cracks."

Backsheesh again at Suez, and through the canal to Port Said, is looked upon with

favour, and diminutive Arabs will keep pace with the ship—when, of course, she is going very, *very* "dead slow"—to accept contributions.

The voyage home, in the main most pleasurable, was not, however, without its tragedy. A young station owner from New South Wales went overboard in the Red Sea. How, it was not easy to make out. He was seen on deck as late as midnight, but never afterwards. He was, we believe, coming to England to be married, a circumstance which gave the sad occurrence, if possible, a more regretful aspect.

A LIST OF WORKS BY

ALBERT F. CALVERT.

Fellow Royal Geographical Society, Fellow Geological Society of Edinburgh, Associate Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, London: Fellow Scottish Geographical Society, Fellow Geographical Society of Australia, Fellow Royal Society of Australia, Fellow Colonial Institute, Fellow Imperial Institute, Member Newcastle Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, Member British Association for the Advancement of Science, Member Hakluyt Society, &c., &c

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EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA. Vol. I.

Mr. CALVERT has expended much research on his work. He has mastered the long and intricate story of Australian exploration, and he tells it with care and spirit. Others have sought to do the same work before him, but none of them on a scale so complete, or in a style more attractive.—*The Scotsman*, July 15th, 1895

Mr. CALVERT is a princely companion for any voyage, but in the matter of Australia—his heart's delight—he is hospitable beyond the dreams of the most exacting guest. His latest book is a triumph of the printer's art: noble margin, large type, sumptuous paper, and reckless liberality of portrait and quaint engraving, combining to make our stay with him a veritable feast of history and travel. It may be that when this fascinating tale of the opening up of the Southern World has been finished, other books on its history will seem tame.—*Morning Leader*, July 18th, 1895

The vast amount of research and observation required in compiling so comprehensive a work as Mr CALVERT here lays before his countrymen, has borne rich fruit, as seed that falls on good ground, and must be pronounced a valuable contribution to Australian literature. No pains have been spared by the publishers in providing a sumptuous edition, amply furnished with portraits and map.—*Lloyd's Newspaper*, July 21st, 1895.

Mr CALVERT's industry in compilation concerning Australia, is enormous and unintermitting. The number of volumes he has already produced on the "Fifth Continent," and its mineral resources, exceeds a dozen, all in a comparatively short time, and this handsome quarto is probably the most readable, and is certainly the most attractive looking of the lot. There are few stories of adventure—as we have had occasion heretofore to remark—more creditable to the world's pioneers than the tale of British enterprise, in opening up Australia. *Daily Chronicle*, July 29th, 1895.

The Exploration of Australia, by Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT, is improving in size, and luxurious in get-up, endowed with a large open page, good paper and type, many effective woodcuts, and a binding exceptionally tasteful. Mr. CALVERT has already produced (with other works on kindred topics) a book on *The Discovery of Australia*, of which the present work may be regarded as a worthy companion.—*The Globe*, July 29th, 1895.

The Exploration of Australia, by ALBERT F. CALVERT, is a notable work on an important subject, and must ever rank as a leading authority. It is not needful at this date to say aught of the share Mr CALVERT has borne in Antipodean development, it is not necessary to refer to the banquet given him by many who have the interests of that Colonial possession most at heart. In this work, however, he has probably done more for the land he loves than in all his other efforts put together, since he has produced a thoroughly popular record of its incorporation in the bounds of the Empire.—*Black and White*, August 10th, 1895.

In a large single volume, admirably printed, profusely illustrated, and tastefully bound, which has recently been issued under the title *The Exploration of Australia*, the eminent geographer, Mr A. F. CALVERT, has recorded the perilous adventures and strange experiences of the valiant and enterprising Englishmen—from William Dampier (1688) to Ainsworth Horrocks (1846), whose names are identified in the annals of Australia with heroic feats and memorable achievements in connection with the exploration of the largest island in the world. The abundant material at Mr CALVERT's disposal has been so judiciously dealt with by that gentleman that his magnificent work not only teems with instructive narrative and thrilling episodes of human intrepidity and endurance, but is invested with all the seductive charm and fascinating glamour of romance inspired by imaginative genius.—*Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 16th, 1895.

Messrs George Philip and Son, of Fleet Street, have just issued, accompanied with portraits and a map, a very handsome volume, entitled *The Exploration of Australia*, by ALBERT F. CALVERT, F.R.G.S., a gentleman who has written quite a library on the history and resources of Australia. The author has aimed at making his book popular and readable, rather than statistical and scientific.—*The Morning*, July 6th, 1895.

The Exploration of Australia is a new work by Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT, the well-known writer on all works connected with that Colony. This is not a boy's work of adventures, but a carefully edited series of narratives, which will please the Royal Geographical Society, and entertain the general reader. Not a detail is wanting, of hardship, of strange happening, of failure, of triumph.—*The Christian World*, July 11th, 1895

It would almost seem as if Mr CALVERT's one object in life were to keep Australia before the public, by the persistent making and publishing of books about it. Eleven volumes have not exhausted his enthusiasm, and he duly completes the dozen with the present compilation.—*Glasgow Herald*, July 11th, 1895.

The story is always interesting.—*Times*, July 12th, 1895.

Mr. CALVERT is a well-known mining expert, and a tried explorer, and it redounds greatly to his credit that, amidst his other multifarious duties, he has found time to write, in faultless English, the history of *The Exploration of Australia*. This feat is all the more surprising, as it is only eighteen months ago since he gave us a similar work on *The Discovery of Australia*. As we have just said, the author has that precious gift of being able to express

himself in excellent English, and, in addition, he has a bright and racy method, which makes it a pleasure to read his writings.—*Citizen*, July 13th, 1895.

Mr. ALBERT CALVERT has sent me a very splendidly bound copy of his book, *The Exploration of Australia*, and a singularly interesting volume it is at the present time. What Mr. CALVERT doesn't know about Australia seems but little worth learning, and he has put his story in excellent language and in highly interesting fashion. Mr. CALVERT is clearly an enthusiast, and his labour in compiling the two hundred and thirty-five pages, of which the book consists, bears the seeming of having been one of affection. The volume will be found a very useful one for reference.—*The Pelican*, July 13th, 1895.

Mr. CALVERT has already achieved reputation as a vivid and correct historian, in his work, entitled *The Discovery of Australia*, and the book under review is of even greater interest than that volume, which is saying much. . . . . The story of the exploration of the vast island is given in strict historical sequence, while the fact of Mr. CALVERT's authorship ensures the authenticity of every detail. Turning from the matter to the manner of the book, we may characterise it as a veritable *édition de luxe*. The illustrations, consisting chiefly of portraits, are on India paper, while the letterpress is on hand-made paper, with broad margins, a delight to the book lover's eye. Finally, a thoroughly up-to-date map of Australia, by Mr. CALVERT, specially compiled for the volume, gives the completing touch to a deeply interesting book.—*The African Review*, July 13th, 1895.

The Exploration of Australia, by ALBERT F. CALVERT, is a sumptuously produced, and most exhaustive and interesting epitome of the labours of the explorers of the great southern Continent. Mr. CALVERT has wisely endeavoured to make the book readable and popular, rather than statistical and scientific, and the result is a volume which will find a wide circle of readers. The maps and illustrations are excellent, and the printing and paper such as one but seldom meet with nowadays. We congratulate Mr. CALVERT heartily on his performance, and are sure it will materially help to keep alive the national daring and endurance which never found more noble illustration than in the careers of men who laid down their lives, in the endeavour to penetrate the great interior deserts of Australia.—*Weekly Times and Echo*, July 14th, 1895.

Mr. CALVERT, who probably knows more of Australia than any man living, has added another handsome volume to his already extensive literary contribution to the history of Australian Exploration. In the work under review, *The Exploration of Australia*, Mr CALVERT gives us an excellent account of the difficult and hazardous travels of such brave pioneers as Grey, Sturt, Eyre, Russell, Horrocks, and others, in the first half of the present century. . . . He writes in an attractive style, and has chosen his authorities with much discretion. Much information is given on scientific and statistical subjects, but never to the loss of interest, and the book is eminently readable. As a critic must always be, to a certain extent, captious, we venture to suggest to Mr. CALVERT that in the next edition of *The Exploration of Australia*, he should add an index to its interesting and varied contents.—*Life*, July 16th, 1895.

The present book is by far the most important Mr. CALVERT has achieved, for *The Exploration of Australia* was a subject that required to be done, and that required also a deal of work to do it adequately. . . . . It is the highest praise that can be bestowed on Mr. CALVERT's volume to say, as can truly be said, that it is the most complete yet produced, and that it must ever rank as an authority.—*Glasgow Citizen*, July 18th, 1895.

We have now to hand a handsomely got-up volume, from the pen of Mr. CALVERT, entitled, *The Exploration of Australia* The contents show much research, and full justice has been done to the subject by the author. . . . . Many of the chapters, dealing with the attempts of the early explorers, are of a fascinating character. . The fact that Mr. CALVERT is himself an explorer of repute, adds zest to his vivid account of the work of his predecessors. . . . . The value of the volume is much enhanced by the splendid map and plates which accompany it. The work should prove of especial interest just now, in view of the attention now being directed, mainly owing to the efforts of the author, to the enormous mineral resources of Australia; and we commend it most heartily to the notice of our readers, as a valuable contribution to the literature of its class.—*Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette*, July 18th, 1895.

Mr. CALVERT has furnished another valuable contribution to Australian literature, and the description of the experiences of the first explorers in a difficult and bewildering country, where almost everything in nature seemed to reverse the usual order of things, cannot fail to be thoroughly interesting to nearly every class of reader.—*Devon Gazette*, July 23rd, 1895.

The present work is one of the handsomest volumes of its kind we remember to have seen, and the information it contains covers the history of exploration in Australia from the earliest date. The book is appropriately dedicated to the Marquis of Ripon, late Secretary of State for the Colonies. Mr CALVERT has been at great pains to go through the various records dealing with explorative enterprise at the Pacific end of the world, and he has finished his work off in a most attractive style. One of the features of the volumes is the set of portraits of explorers, all of which are admirably rendered.—*European Mail*, July 24th, 1895.

Industry and patient research mark every line in the first volume of this most deeply interesting book, and, indeed, it would be a task of almost insuperable difficulty to describe the gradual unveiling of the great Australian land if to other qualities were not added the strongest feelings of sympathy and true patriotism. It will at once be recognised that it is in this spirit that Mr CALVERT has set himself to work, and has made to live again such famous Englishmen as William Dampier, Captain Cook, William Charles Wentworth, Captain Sturt, and many others. The reader, with his interest keenly aroused from the first, will find himself quickly absorbed in the excitement and dangers of the expedition which followed one upon the other, and will learn how the greatest Colonial possession under the British flag has, step by step, developed . . . We congratulate the author with the most earnest sincerity on the success of this great effort, following as it does on an admirable series of works on the Colony with which he is so closely identified.—*Colonies and India*, August 10th, 1895.

Mr CALVERT, who is a member of numerous learned societies, has written a number of handbooks with reference to Western Australian and its gold interests. The present volume, which is dedicated by permission to the Marquis of

Ripon, late Secretary of State for the Colonies, is a handsome quarto on the wider subject of Australian exploration It is a popular work rather than a volume of original research or the result of a great deal of special study The author confesses that he is a busy man, without the leisure necessary for the writing of a profound and exhaustive treatise But in its own way the book is one of real value . . . . . Though his pen is that of a ready writer, Mr. CALVERT tells his story with much power and picturesqueness, and there can be no doubt that this volume will be widely read It is illustrated by an excellent map and several portraits.—*Aberdeen Free Press*, August 19th, 1895.

The Exploration of Australia, by ALBERT F. CALVERT, is a monumental work Its well-known author is a Fellow of many learned societies, a member of many more, and the writer of so portentous a list of works on the Australasian Continent and its resources and conditions of every kind, in every order, that we cannot pretend to summarize, much less to particularize it. . . . . The author promises, on his return from his present voyage to Australia, to devote himself to the completion of his comprehensive history of our great Colonial possession The work will be received with the welcome of appetite whetted by this admirable introduction to its theme —*World*, August 8th, 1895

There are few more thrilling stories than that of the exploration of that country, and never has it been more admirably told than by Mr. CALVERT. As a geographer, a geologist, and a mining expert, he is fully qualified to deal with all the aspects of the history, progress, and development of a country possessing such vast mineral resources, but no subject has he treated in a more able or interesting manner than that of exploration.—*Liverpool Courier*, Aug 30th, 1895

Mr. CALVERT has been a prolific writer, fourteen works being detailed relating principally to Western Australia and its resources. Probably the *Exploration of Australia* may be reckoned as Mr CALVERT'S *magnum opus* as yet Mr CALVERT is a very agreeable writer, and his work is presented in a most pleasing form —*Capitalist*, September 7th, 1895

Englishmen are proud of the Australian Colonies, and will never weary of listening to the story of the men whose courage and enterprise first made known the nature of the vast area of which they consist. In Mr ALBERT F CALVERT'S latest volume, *The Exploration of Australia*, that story is once more told, largely from the journals of the explorers themselves.—*Westminster Gazette*, August 19th, 1895.

A more handsome volume it would be difficult for printers, binders, and paper-makers to turn out Nor is the story which Mr. CALVERT has to tell unworthy of the splendid setting he gives it. Such is the material with which Mr. CALVERT has to deal, and we could wish that this volume, which is written in a very popular style, might enjoy the advantage of the wide circulation which his brochures on Western Australia have attained *Home News*, Aug. 23rd, 1895

Mr. CALVERT'S books on Australia represent almost a library in themselves. They deal with every aspect of the Australian past, present, and future. In this volume—a handsome and beautifully produced quarto—Mr CALVERT tells the story of Australian exploration It is a very brave story, with much in it that redounds to the credit of British pluck and enterprise, though it has its dark side also.—*Yorkshire Herald*, August 26th, 1895.

The author of *The Discovery of Australia*, issued some eighteen months since, now presents us with a handsome volume, in which he seeks to set forth the solid ground of undisputed fact. *Bristol Times and Mirror*, August 31st, 1895

In this handsome quarto, dedicated to the Marquis of Ripon, the late Colonial Secretary, Mr CALVERT re-tells the well-worn story of the early Antipodean navigators, and of the more famous of the inland explorers of the continent of Australia.—*Spectator*, September 7th, 1895.

The story of Australian exploration is well told in this beautiful quarto, with its excellent maps and interesting illustrations, especially of the men who led the exploring parties, governed the budding settlements, or otherwise distinguished themselves in the history of the great Southern land . . . . . It is an important and interesting book, which should be extensively welcome.—*Asiatic Quarterly*, October, 1895

Mr. CALVERT'S book contains much useful information and materials enough for many romances. "The Wonderful Story of William Buckley," and many other episodes in Mr. CALVERT'S pages, are as marvellous as writers of fiction ever imagined. The book is large and well got up, and full of portraits of Australian heroes, and accompanied by an excellent map. —*Literary World*, September 27th, 1895.

Mr. CALVERT'S handsome book gives a very clear and readable account, drawn in large measure from their own diaries, of the works of several of the earlier Australian explorers . . . . . Mr. CALVERT'S book is enriched by a number of interesting portraits, and a very large and good map, which greatly assists the reader in following the various explorations described.—*Guardian*, October 2nd, 1895.

In a very handsomely got-up volume Mr. CALVERT has ably summarized the leading discoveries and adventures of the earlier explorers of the Australian Continent.—*Morning Advertiser*, October 10th, 1895

A good many books have been written on the exploration of the Australian Continent Mr. CALVERT'S handsome volume is unquestionably one of the best; and, had it a proper chapter of contents and any index at all, it would be a useful work of reference. This, however, is the severest criticism that can be passed on it. The literature is very interesting, and is full of adventure incurred with the definite object of advancing the welfare of the people —*St. James's Gazette*, October 4th, 1895.

THE EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA. Vol. II.

Continuing the work done by him in his book, *The Exploration of Australia* from its first discovery till the year 1846, Mr ALBERT F CALVERT has sought in the present volume to place before his readers in a succinct, but at the same time sufficiently exhaustive form, an account of the exploratory enterprises undertaken in the great southern land from the date of Dr Ludwig Leichardt's disastrous journey to the present day. He is to be congratulated on a marked improvement in the method of handling the material at his disposal, and the corresponding result as regards the readability of his work His criticisms on the methods pursued by various explorers, and the results attained by them, are keen but just, and deserve attention from the fact of his personal experiences qualifying him to write as an expert on the subject —*Morning Advertiser*, August 24, 1896.

In another handsome and portly volume, Mr CALVERT continues the story of the *Exploration of Australia*. . . Mr CALVERT writes simply and straightforwardly, and as one who knows his subject thoroughly. His labour of love in putting on record the achievements of his fellow-colonists who have gained fame as explorers, leaves nothing to be desired. In reading the story, we are struck, not only with the heroism and tenacity of purpose which marks the career of these explorers, but the uselessness of much of their labour—a remark which applies also to the achievements of Arctic travellers. Perhaps the chief good accomplished is the bringing out in a prosaic age of some of the best qualities of human nature—generous rivalry, self control, patient endurance, and steadfast determination, together with fiery zeal and great courage A magnificent map, which marks the route of all the chief explorers, is bound up with the volume.—*St James's Gazette*, August 26, 1896.

This is a subject which Mr. CALVERT has made his own both by study and practical work as an explorer. An important expedition to explore the unknown parts of Australia, equipped by Mr. CALVERT, is now at work, and the results are looked forward to with great interest —*World*, August 26, 1896.

Mr A F CALVERT's work, *The Exploration of Australia*, 1844 to 1896, is the continuation of an early volume detailing the discoveries which had been made between the date of our earliest knowledge of the country and the year in which he now takes up the thread of his narrative It is a period that has added to our knowledge rather by the slow process of efforts partially rewarded on each occasion than by any geographical *coups*.—*Daily Telegraph*, August 28, 1896.

We have to acknowledge a copy of the second and completing volume of Mr. A F CALVERT'S *History of the Exploration of Australia* It is a sumptuous volume Whilst not pretending to give the names of all who have contributed to the opening up of Australia, Mr CALVERT claims that he has not left out the name of any leader of distinction who has conducted exploratory expeditions throughout about three million of square miles of Australian territory. Even now the exploration of Australia is far from complete, and an expedition has just been fitted out by Mr. CALVERT, which has for its object the exploration of some 280,000 square miles of territory, of which little or nothing is at present known—an area five times greater than that of England This expedition has been placed under the command of Mr. L. A. Wells, and it aims at completing the work of the Elder Expedition recalled in 1893. It starts under the auspices of the South Australian Branch of the Geographical Society of Australia, and it hopes to have completed its labours in about eighteen months. Meantime, *The Exploration of Australia* may be commended to all who are interested in the early history of the great island continent, and Mr. CALVERT has done a public service in the preparation of these volumes, which necessarily represent an outlay not to be recouped by any probable sales of the work. *To-day*, August 22nd, 1896.

This is a handsome volume, in which Mr CALVERT, whose name is familiar in connection with Australian exploration and the development of the Western Australian Goldfields, has completed his history of exploration in the Antipodean continent from the earliest times up to the present year Space forbids us at the moment to go further into the *Exploration of Australia*. We shall take an early occasion to return to this most interesting subject; but it may be acknowledged at once that the publication of that book will be reckoned in time to be not by any means the least important of the many splendid services which Mr CALVERT has rendered to the Australian Colonies.—*Colonies and India*, August 15th, 1896.

The second volume of Mr. CALVERT'S work, which deals with the subject from 1844, and brings us up to the Elder Expedition of 1892, is very welcome, and must prove of vast interest to all concerned in any way with matters Australian. . . In addition to forwarding the interests of Australia with his pen, Mr. Calvert has, at his own expense, fitted out a scientific exploring expedition, with Mr. L. A Wells at its head; and a glance at the map showing the unexplored portions of the Continent —which has been specially prepared for this volume— convinces one that there is ample scope for work in this direction, and, should the portion of Western Australia to be explored prove as valuable as those already known, there will be, indeed, a great future for that Colony A map showing the route taken by the various explorers, which accompanies the volume, is remarkably clear, and must prove extremely useful to students of the book, the entire appearance of which is highly creditable to all concerned.—*Australian Mail*, August 20, 1896.

Mr CALVERT, the well-known author on Australia, has written a new book, which Messrs. Philips have this week issued The work, beautifully printed and bound, and supplied with a large and excellent map of the Island Continent, and a smaller one showing regions unexplored, is entitled the *Exploration of Australia*, 1844-1896. Mr. CALVERT'S book is an amazing record of bravery and endurance. *Echo*, August 22, 1896.

The Exploration of Australia from 1844-1896, by ALBERT F. CALVERT, is practically a combination of a previous book, giving similar information about the great island continent up to 1846, which has met with a deservedly favourable reception —*Weekly Times and Echo*, August 23, 1896.

In a second large and handsome volume, Mr ALBERT F. CALVERT continues and completes his compilation of the materials of the history of *The Exploration of Australia* His first volume brought the record of expeditions down to the year 1840 In the present instalment of the work Mr CALVERT deals with the explorations of the past fifty years, by which, with the exception of certain large areas in the interior of Western and South Australia, the whole of the interior of the 'Island Continent' has been visited by ardent discoverers. —*Scotsman*, August 2nd, 1896.

Mr. CALVERT has already given us the history of Australian Exploration from the first discovery of the Great Southern Island Continent to 1846, and now, under the title given above, the publishers have issued another grand volume bringing the stirring narrative down to the present day. Mr. CALVERT is an explorer himself, and he is an enthusiast on the subject of West Australian exploration. Nothing could be more natural than for him to desire that this great work should be completed. He has generously devoted his means to accomplish the object, and we are pleased to learn that the preparations are in a forward state. All that experience and foresight could dictate has been done to make the exploration successful, and no more perfectly selected and equipped party has ever set out. Mr L. A Wells will be the boss, and we hope in due course to receive good news of progress.—*Capitalist*, August 29, 1896.

Mr. CALVERT is well known in connection with the exploration of Australia, and his name has already been appended to nearly a score of books dealing with the development and characteristics of our Australasian Colonies. His book, *The Exploration of Australia*, from its first discovery till the year 1846, has been before the public for some time, but the retentiveness of the subject has necessitated a second volume, and in the book before us Mr CALVERT has in a most complete manner endeavoured to give a true account of the exploratory enterprises which have been undertaken from the date of Dr. Ludwig Leichardt's disastrous journey, in 1844, till the unfortunately abandoned Elder Expedition, conducted by Mr David Lindsay in the early part of this decade. . . . . It not only displays the enthusiasm of Mr CALVERT on the subject with which he deals, but it also includes a plethora of facts and details in connection with the various enterprises which have succeeded and failed, while Mr. CALVERT, in his preface, takes care to acknowledge his indebtedness in some degree to previous writers on this subject.—*African Review*, August 29, 1896.

Few writers have done more to give to the world a complete record of the many expeditions into Central Australia which gallant explorers have from time to time made, than Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT, the gentleman whose exploring party are at present engaged in endeavouring to map and "discover" the various large tracts of land in West and South Australia hitherto unknown in anything like detail. . . . The interested public have been greatly indebted to him for his works on the subject, but none of them will be found of greater value than the latest (the product of 1895), which is a unique collection of all requisite facts attending the expedition from 1844 to the present day. . . . The book is well written and most interesting, despite its bulk; the print is also good, and the binding neat and strong. The maps which accompany it are extremely valuable and easy for reference. *Western Daily Mercury*, August 29, 1896.

Altogether Mr. CALVERT has given us a book which is a record, and some of the most daring expeditions ever undertaken, and which will be a valuable addition to any library.—*Lloyd's Newspaper*, August 30th, 1896.

With this brief introduction to what is really a very important volume of travel and research, we must leave Mr CALVERT's book. That that gentleman should have decided to explore and examine the unexplored and unmapped parts of Australia is a fact that will lend additional interest to the perusal of this volume, which is full of information and interest. —*Bristol Times*, August 29th, 1896.

Mr. Calvert is doubtless an authority on the subject which he has made so intimately his own Certainly he has taken infinite pains to give his readers an account of every search for new ground that has been made on the Australian Continent.—*Yorkshire Herald*, September 2nd, 1896.

About a year ago Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT issued a book giving an account of the exploration of Australia from its first discovery till the year 1846. That work he has now followed up with *The Exploration of Australia* from 1844 to 1896. Mr. CALVERT is something of an enthusiast on this subject, and his book is certainly a monument to his industry *Westminster Gazette*, September 2nd, 1896.

WEST AUSTRALIAN MINING INVESTORS' HANDBOOK.

This publication should be of much use as a reference book, affording as it does exhaustive particulars of the mining Companies of Western Australia, supplemented by a coloured map of the country, and plans of the various goldfields, with a directory of the directors of those Companies, and other useful particulars. There is much information which cannot be got in the books of reference which cover wider areas, and cannot, therefore, give so much space to individual departments as specialist publications like that under review.—*Financial Times*, January 18th, 1895

Mr. CALVERT seems to have covered his ground very well His information is concise, and what is more important, it is up-to-date. The directory of directors at the end is valuable, too, though it may in some cases be regarded with mingled feelings by those whose names appear in it. For all those investors who have any interest in the mines of West Australia, the *Mining Investors' Handbook* will be a desirable acquisition. *Financial News*, January 17th, 1895.

The author of this *Handbook*, Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT, has been the leading pioneer in directing attention to the marvellous possibilities of the territory as a gold-producing country. Now that the character of the region is thoroughly appreciated, Mr. CALVERT considers it his duty to direct investments in the right channels. The information of the *Handbook* is intended to be a protection for persons investing money in Western Australian mines, and it may certainly be consulted with profit. The account of the different fields is made from personal acquaintance, and that of the various mining enterprises, is well adapted to make the intending investor cautious We can commend the book most heartily.—*Mining World*, January 5th, 1895.

Those interested in West Australian mines will do well to secure a copy of the *West Australian Mining Investors' Handbook*, for the volume is replete with interesting information admirably put.—*Pelican*, January 3rd, 1895

WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND ITS WELFARE.

Under this title that most prolific writer, Mr. ALBERT F CALVERT, gives us a reproduction of articles which have appeared in the *West Australian Review* during the past two years. His enthusiasm for the Colony of his adoption is too well known to require further emphasising at our hands.—*Star*, March 19th, 1895

A very interesting, useful and instructive book on West Australia The articles in it are all well worth reading —*Money*, March 20th, 1895

Mr ALBERT F CALVERT, who is an authority on the subject, has produced a little book which conveys a good deal of information about the Colony, which is not generally obtainable Mr. CALVERT's little book is worth reading.—*Evening News and Post*, March 20th, 1895.

A timely handbook for investors to read is Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT's *Western Australia and its Welfare*. An acknowledged authority on West Australian matters, Mr. CALVERT writes as one who has had practical experience in that new El Dorado. The series of articles reproduced in this volume from the *West Australian Review*, and directly dealing with the most productive gold mines, may thus be pronounced most opportune and serviceable. *Penny Illustrated Paper*, March 23rd, 1895.

All those who have perused Mr. CALVERT's remarks, with their wealth of illustration, abundance of quotation, and vigour and aptness of style, will be glad of an opportunity of possessing them in a more convenient and permanent form —*Mining Journal*, March 23rd, 1895.

Mr CALVERT has done well in publishing this interesting collection of articles, which appeared in the columns of the *West Australian Review* during 1893 and 1894, and which undoubtedly have contributed in no small degree to the prominence which Australia has now secured in the mining and financial world. We may add that, in addition to being thoroughly practical, Mr CALVERT has succeeded in making his book exceedingly interesting —*Colonies and India*, March 23rd, 1895.

The style is bright and lucid, and sometimes forcible To any intending emigrant, and to anyone interested in the mineral resources of the Colony, it will be a handy and valuable little volume —*Commerce*, March 27th, 1895

It is full of interesting reflections and facts.—*Home News*, April 5th, 1895.

The articles are slight and sketchy, but will probably afford, in a convenient form, some information of interest to the many persons whom the late development in West Australian Mines has led to regard West Australia as a profitable field of investment.—*Times*, April 12th, 1895.

This little book contains practical information, which will be invaluable to all who are interested in West Australian enterprises, and it comes at an opportune moment. Mr ALBERT F. CALVERT, although a young man, is possessed of abnormal energy and talent. He has made Western Australia his speciality His present work is well worth purchasing and perusing —*England*, April 13th, 1895.

THE DISCOVERY OF AUSTRALIA.

The monograph, though avowedly based, to a large extent, on the researches of previous writers, is of more than passing interest, and some of its extracts from the journals of the early navigators deserve to be rescued from oblivion, and to be interwoven with tales and more exact knowledge in the pages of this scholarly historical treatise.—*Standard*, November 30th, 1893

Mr ALBERT F CALVERT, who has devoted much study to the past and to the present of our Colonies in the Antipodes, and particularly to West Australia, has investigated, in *The Discovery of Australia*, the curious and highly controversial subject of the date and circumstances of the first finding of the Continent, and the personality and nationality of its first discoverer. . . . A most valuable feature of the book is the numerous series of reproductions of mediæval maps and other illustrations of what was known of Australia before it became the home of an important branch of the English race —*Scotsman*, October 2nd, 1893.

Mr CALVERT, the author of several works on the history, geography, and resources of Australia, has here put forward an extremely interesting volume, one which will be especially valued by all who are attracted by the fascinating subject of the history of geographical research . . . There is both an archæological and geographical interest about this book, which has been compiled with much labour and care.—*Glasgow Herald*, October 5th, 1893

Mr. CALVERT has found many tracings on old charts indicating a knowledge of the existence of a great southern Continent, and he thinks that probably some individual navigator landed on the western coast of Australia in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, afterwards bringing the news of his discovery to Europe The volume is well printed, and the maps are finely reproduced.—*Nature*, November 9th, 1893.

Is a notable addition to the Australian library —*British Australasian*, October 5th, 1893

Concerning "The Discovery of Australia," all that is known is embodied in a handsome volume by Mr Albert Calvert. The ancient maps, reproduced in a most satisfactory style, are singularly interesting.—*Glasgow Evening News*, October 5th, 1893.

This, the latest addition to the literature dealing with our great Australian possessions, is a cleverly compiled work, which will add to the reputation of the talented young author.—*West Middlesex Standard*, September 30th, 1893.

Mr. Albert Calvert has added another valuable and interesting work to the already long list of his books on Australian subjects, and this account of the discovery of the great Antipodean island will, beyond doubt, be taken up with keen interest by all who have any concern with that part of the world . . . . The author has dug up many curious things in relation to the early days of Australia, and much new light is thrown upon the voyagings of Captain Cook in Antipodean waters.—*Colonies and India*, October 7th, 1893.

We have read Mr. Calvert's latest contribution to what may be termed the Literature of the Antipodes with very great interest indeed. To his facile pen, readers on both sides of the globe have been recently indebted for a great deal of valuable information about the great island Continent, and the exceedingly readable account of its discovery, and the various claims which have been put forward to the honour of it, which now lies before us, will, we believe, take higher rank than any of Mr. Calvert's previous books . . . . . Altogether we can strongly recommend Mr Calvert's history of the discovery of Australia. From the first page to last the book is brimming over with information upon a most important subject, pleasantly put before the reader with a modesty which is very taking.—*North Western Gazette*, October 14th, 1893.

Mr. Calvert has evidently used all the means at his command to make his book as interesting and complete as possible, and his notes on the maps are well worthy of the attention of all interested in the subject of the discovery of Australia.—*Field*, November 11th, 1893.

To the vast majority of the reading public the details will be entirely new.—*Echo*, March 8th, 1894.

Mr. Calvert has laid us under an obligation by his antiquarian research.—*Speaker*, March 10th, 1894.

Mr. Albert F. Calvert, who is the author of several monographs upon Western Australia, has issued *The Discovery of Australia*. It claims to be a simple statement of such historical facts as the author could collect, with a reproduction of certain maps illustrating the gradual progress of knowledge regarding Australia. The collation of authorities for the letterpress has been judicious, the maps are highly interesting, and Mr Calvert has to be complimented upon issuing a volume so acceptable.—*Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 25th, 1893.

This is not everybody's book, but there are few libraries which will not be the richer for it.—*Daily Chronicle*, December 25th, 1893.

Mr. Albert F. Calvert has added another valuable and interesting work to the already long list of his books on Australian subjects, and this account of the discovery of the great Antipodean island will, beyond doubt, be taken up with keen interest by all who have any concern with that part of the world. Not the least interesting feature of this handsome volume is the large number of old maps which have been reproduced. The book is handsomely bound, and is in every way a great credit both to the author and to the publishers.—*European Mail*, October 11th, 1893.

Under the title *The Discovery of Australia*, Mr Calvert has compiled an interesting account, in the form of an abstract chronicle, of Australian voyages from the earliest times, such as offers a consecutive survey of the progress of discovery and of geographical knowledge.—*Saturday Review*, March 10th, 1894.

The volume is extremely curious, and it should interest others besides patriotic Australians.—*National Observer*, February 3rd, 1894.

Mr. Calvert has shown in more than one volume of no mean importance how delightful and competent a student he is of all that pertains to Australia, past or present. This handsome volume may be regarded as his chief work. As a contribution to historical research it is invaluable, and will not, we should say, be easily shifted from its pride of place as the most thorough investigation which has been given to the world of the earliest discoveries of Australia. The volume is replete with ancient and curious maps, which must have been collected at great cost in time and money.—*Home News*, February 16th, 1894.

A useful task has been undertaken, and very successfully carried out by Mr. Calvert, in arranging and discussing the claims to the discovery of Australia put forth by various voyagers, from Marco Polo who is stated to have heard of the great Southern Land from the Chinese—down to Captain Cook. The value of the work has been much enhanced by the reproduction of most interesting old charts.—*Scottish Geographical Magazine*, January, 1894.

Mr. Calvert's is a useful piece of historical compilation, and the reproduction of the maps is clearly and artistically accomplished.—*Manchester Guardian*, April 17th, 1894.

Mr Calvert, who may be considered an authority upon Western Australia, and who is known in Australian mining circles in the city, has just published another work on his favourite Continent. The volume has been printed in an extremely quaint style, well suited to set off the curious Portuguese and other sixteenth century maps, the production of which, together with that of the other plates, leaves nothing to be desired.—*City Press*, March 28th, 1894.

The Discovery of Australia, by Albert F. Calvert, would be an acceptable volume did it contain nothing more than the two dozen old maps between its covers, but the letterpress is a very fair specimen of compilation, Mr Calvert being a judicious student of the literature of his subject, with a shrewd instinct for what will interest the general public, and that is not the least of its merits.—*The Guardian*, 28th March, 1894.

With great care and much research Mr Calvert has traced the progress of the knowledge of Australia from the earliest times. He has added considerably to the value and interest of his work by the inclusion of many of the oldest maps chronologically arranged, and following the letterpress extracts from the earliest authorities.—*South Australian Register*, 3rd January, 1894.

THE COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELD, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

It gives an interesting description of the country about Coolgardie, and shows it to be richly auriferous The district apparently promises to become one of the most important of the Australian Goldfields, and the book will be welcome to all who are interested in developing its resources.—*Scotsman*, June 11th, 1894

The book is published at a low price, so that it comes within reach of all who desire to become acquainted with the conditions of this most recently discovered goldfield. *Journal of Royal Colonial Institute*, July 18th, 1894.

This book is dedicated to the Hon. Sir Malcolm Fraser, K.C M G., Agent-General for the Colony, by the author, who is a mining engineer, and no doubt the greatest authority upon the subject of West Australian exploration and mineral resources now before the public.—*Capitalist*, 23rd June, 1894

This publication seems to us well worth its price of one shilling, if it contained nothing but one large coloured map of West Australia, which will be useful to many who are interested in the Colony.—*Investors' Guardian*, June 16th, 1894.

The author's object is to give plain, unvarnished facts concerning the results already attained on the goldfields, setting forth its advantages, prospects and drawbacks.—*Glasgow Herald*, June 7th, 1894.

Apart from the utility of the treatise to the speculator in gold mines, its attentive perusal may well give rise to surprise at the infatuation which allows a rational and educated age to subject the prosperity of all industries to absolute dependence on that industry which is most precarious, costly and demoralising, and involves the greatest amount of human self-sacrifice of any.—*Manchester Guardian*, June 8th, 1894.

Evidence that the Coolgardie district is richly auriferous.—*The Bookman*, July, 1894.

Some months ago, Mr. ALBERT F CALVERT, a mining engineer, who has travelled extensively in Western Australia, published *The Mineral Resources of Western Australia*, which shed a flood of light upon the subject, and he has followed this volume by writing *The Coolgardie Goldfields*, issued this week by Simpkin, Marshall and Co., of London. Like its predecessor, it provides an immense fund of information; but the author converges his attention upon Coolgardie.—*Weekly Citizen*, June 16th, 1894.

The evidence adduced goes to show that the Coolgardie district is richly auriferous.—*Nature*, June 7th, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT collates the experiences of prospectors and explorers, and shows the Coolgardie district to be one of immense richness.—*Home Notes*, June 15th, 1894.

The book is sure of a welcome by those interested, from any cause or motive, in the discovery of new goldfields.—*Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July, 1894

Mr. CALVERT, who has some experience, if anybody has, of mining in Australia, is just the person to give trustworthy evidence to refute mis-statements and dispel illusions.—*The Colonies and India*, June 9th, 1894.

To describe the gold discoveries of Western Australia in general, and of Coolgardie district in particular, is the object of a shilling brochure recently issued by that most prolific of all writers on this subject, Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT.—*Mining World*, June 9th, 1894

Mr CALVERT's pamphlet is exceedingly useful.—*Public Opinion*, June 15th, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT's opinion on the wealth of that gold region is very favourable.—*Morning*, June 4th, 1894.

The impression conveyed by the book is that Coolgardie will be a field of great possibility. The book is illustrated by the most complete map of the goldfields of Western Australia we have yet seen.—*City Leader*, June 16th, 1894.

The author is a well-known writer upon all that concerns the Australian Colonies, and the object of his latest work is to give plain, unvarnished facts concerning the results already attained on the goldfields, and setting forth its advantages, prospects and drawbacks . . A mass of information is supplied, and anyone proposing to visit Western Australia will value the little work, which is provided with an excellent map.—*Western Mercury*, June 29th, 1894.

A book from the pen of so distinguished an authority as Mr. ALBERT F CALVERT on everything that appertains to gold mining, must be perused with interest by anyone who has this question at heart.—*Whitehall Review*, July 14th, 1894.

This little work has made a timely appearance. Now that the Coolgardie Goldfield has awakened the eyes of the world to the richness of Western Australia, and now that it is attracting universal attention and has reached so great an eminence as to become one of the greatest gold-producing districts, ... Mr. CALVERT's book is likely to interest a wide circle of readers. It is written by one who thoroughly understands his subject, who has not only travelled all over Western Australia, but has made himself so intimately acquainted with every goldfield, that he has now become a recognised authority . . . To describe the contents of the volume would be useless labour. We cannot do better, probably, than quote the words of the author respecting the idea he had in his mind.—"My object is to give plain, unvarnished facts concerning the results already attained on the goldfields, setting forth its advantages, prospects and drawbacks." This object, in our opinion, Mr. CALVERT has attained.—*Mining Journal*, June 2nd, 1894

In *The Coolgardie Goldfield*, Mr. ALBERT CALVERT once more brings under public notice the gold-yielding character of Western Australia The story and the photograph of the gold itself are fitted to make men's mouths water.—*North British Economist*, July 2nd, 1894.

THE ABORIGINES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. CALVERT has written much, and much to good purpose, anent the resources of Western Australia. His present little book is an attempt to tell what little can be told, to make known what little is known of the primeval race.—*Daily Chronicle*, August 25th, 1894

Mr. CALVERT's little book will probably reach a good many people who would never see a larger work, and its sensible and humane and moderate tone may very possibly, as he hopes, rouse interest in these aborigines.—*Manchester Guardian*, September 4th, 1894.

We owe a great deal to this gentleman's persistent efforts to spread abroad the knowledge so eagerly inquired for respecting Western Australia, and the many books he has written upon this much discussed topic, have been wonderfully successful. His knowledge, gathered from travel in every quarter of the Colony, he has embodied in a really interesting and readable book.—*Mining Journal*, August 4th, 1894

Much that is curious about the aborigines of Western Australia will be found in the bound pamphlet which Mr. ALBERT CALVERT, the well-known mining engineer, has just published.—*Speaker*, August 25th, 1894

This is an attempt to set down briefly, and simply, such facts as the author could glean concerning a race in contact with which he was frequently brought during his wanderings as a mining engineer.—*Literary World*, August 31st, 1894

The result of Mr. CALVERT's wanderings, and his many opportunities of coming into contact with the natives, is an instructive little book on their manners and customs. It is terse in style, and in small bulk, tells a great deal that is well worth knowing.—*Aberdeen Free Press*, August 13th, 1894

Coming as these notes do from a man who has had so much actual dealing with the natives, they cannot but occupy an important position among the literature relating to a race which possesses such serious obstacles to research.—*Oxford Times*, August 25th, 1894

Mr. CALVERT writes from personal experience . . . he has managed to collect a good deal that is of interest.—*Scotsman*, August 13th, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT spent several years in Western Australia as a mining engineer, and was brought into immediate contact with various races of the natives of that country. This is one of the few books that one may put down with regret that it is not of larger dimensions.—*Dundee Advertiser*, August 30th, 1894

The author has had many opportunities of coming into contact with the natives, and of gathering facts concerning them. The result is an instructive little book on their manners and customs.—*Daily Free Press*, August 13th, 1894

To have what has been ascertained and put together in a handy form by one who is familiar with the people, is very helpful.—*Liverpool Mercury*, August 29th, 1894

Is an extremely interesting little volume, containing what to most readers will be new information regarding the aboriginal peoples of Australia, and their manners and customs.—*North British Daily Mail*, August 13th, 1894

Mr. CALVERT in his little book successfully disproves these ignorant assumptions, and testifies to the intelligence and humour they exhibit, their fondness of music, and the kindness of their family relations. The book is brightly written, and is interesting throughout.—*Rock*, August 17th, 1894

To a very long list of works about Western Australia, Mr. CALVERT has added this short description of the aboriginal inhabitants of the district. His sketch has the merit of originality, and the ordinary reader will be interested to read Mr. CALVERT's account of some of their strange doings.—*Glasgow Herald*, August 10th, 1894

Mr. CALVERT's little book on the natives of Western Australia, appears at an opportune moment. The subject is by no means easy to treat, but Mr. CALVERT has collected a good deal of interesting information.—*Bookseller*, September, 1894.

This is a welcome addition to the numerous works which Mr. CALVERT has written on Australia. Almost all the information that is available with regard to the natives of Western Australia is presented in this work, and as much of it is drawn from the author's personal experiences, it is all the more valuable. We have pleasure in commending the book to the attention of those who are interested in ethnological studies.—*Weston-super-Mare Gazette*, August 4th, 1894

During his wanderings through Western Australia the writer came across a good many of the natives, and he has much to say of their queer ways.—*Lloyd's Newspaper*, August 12th, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT, in his wanderings about Western Australia as a mining engineer, has mixed a good deal with the aborigines, and has observed much; so that his book, though small, is of distinct value. After reading it, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the native Australian is by no means so black as he is painted.—*Publishers' Circular*, August 8th, 1894

Such information as the author has gleaned concerning these curious specimens of the human race are set forth in an interesting style within the pages of this work, which must be of use and interest to all connected with Western Australia.—*Southampton Times*, August 18th, 1894

THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Mr A F Calvert gives a well-informed and readable account of *The Mineral Resources of Western Australia*. Mr Calvert writes from an intimate knowledge of his subject, and his book will interest not only those mineralogical and geological specialists to whom it makes its first appeal, but also everyone who is concerned in the progress of gold mining generally, and Western Australia in particular.—*Scotsman*, November 6th, 1893.

In the present volume, Mr Calvert, who has done so much to familiarise the British public with the characteristics and capabilities of the Colony, has endeavoured to set forth in small compass a striking array of facts in connection with the mineral resources.—*Glasgow Herald*, November 9th, 1893.

No one has written more extensively, or with greater knowledge upon this subject, than Mr. Albert F. Calvert. On perusing this work the reader will be surprised to find how many goldfields there are, the favourable prospects they offer, both for surface and deep mining, and their accessibility.—*Mining World*, March 10th, 1894.

Mr. Calvert's choice of a subject has precluded him from elaborating round points of detail. The book is not a whit the less useful upon that account. The graphic way in which the main outline of the narrative has been sketched in, and the bold relief with which the more solid parts stand out, are no inconsiderable reward for the persistency with which the author has curbed his pen from any approach to proxility. Thanks to the broad and liberal way in which Mr. Calvert has treated his subject, the work appeals to a much wider section of the community than the School of Mines or the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. The general reader will take it up with pleasure, and put it down reluctantly. There would not, however, in this case be any justification for a parallel of the accusation which Sir Robert Ball has incurred by the most recent of his fascinating books. Mr. Calvert has not allowed the fear of narrowness to hurry him into the opposite fault, nor his desire to address a large public body to furnish an excuse for an unscientifical or an inaccurate language.—*Mining Journal*, February 17th, 1894.

Mr Calvert presents in his *Mineral Resources of Western Australia* an array of facts of particular interest to the capitalist and emigrant. Beneath the surface of the country lie belts and reefs of gold-bearing rocks sufficient to satisfy the most avaricious, and Mr. Calvert is desirous that the profuseness of these, and like mineral deposits, should convince people that the country offers "mighty possibilities" to enterprise.—*Nature*, November 16th, 1893.

This work comes very opportunely at the present moment, when the attention of practical men is being turned to Western Australia, on account of the marvellous mineral resources the Colony has recently been shown to possess. As an authority on his subject, Mr Calvert is second to none. He is a man of science, and a man who has seen.—*Financial Observer*, November 11th, 1893.

Another addition to the considerable number of works which have lately appeared on the gold mines of the world. It will be found useful as a descriptive catalogue of the various fields, claims, mines, and concessions in Western Australia.—*Manchester Guardian*, November 30th, 1893.

The author, a mining engineer of high reputation, anticipates a great future for the "Cinderella" as it has been called, of the great Australian Colonies. Nothing particular has been known of this wealth as yet, but the objects of the present handbook, as it may be called, is to explain the nature and describe the vocation of these mineral deposits. The country, we are shown, has extensive goldfields as yet little known or only partially worked, which, we are led to believe, only require to be worked scientifically to justify the expenditure of capital in their developments.—*City Free Press*, November 13th, 1893.

The writer of *Mineral Resources of Western Australia* is inspired by the creditable ambition of doing justice, in at least his speciality, to the "Cinderella of the South." Whether Mr Calvert, who is an enthusiastic mineralogist, will succeed in materially diverting to the Western Colony the at present tiny stream of emigration flowing to the Antipodes may be doubted. The book, which is, no doubt, thoroughly reliable, will be of much interest to miners.—*Dundee Advertiser*, November 23rd, 1893.

Mr. Calvert is thoroughly experienced in the subject upon which he has written in this handbook, and the work should therefore prove of great use and interest to a large number of persons.—*Publishers' Circular*, Nov 11th, 1893.

The book deals with a country which is as yet little known, but has probably a great future before it. The account of Calvert's discoveries in Australia is good reading. We are told that he formed the theory that gold would be found in parallels running across Australia, and that the Western parallel would be the richest. New discoveries, says our author, are every day adding strength and confirmation to this doctrine. It seems, however, that only in recent years have the colonists known anything like the truth about the mineral resources of Western Australia. Doubtless this book has been written with the primary object of drawing the attention of capitalists and emigrants to Western Australia, but it contains enough that is of general interest to allow us to commend it to our readers.—*Western Mercury*, Nov 20th, 1893.

Mr. Calvert, not long ago, published a small handbook on *Western Australia and its Goldfields*, and though in the present treatise he has something to say of the tin, copper and coal deposits of the Colony, the work is, with the exception of a few pages, entirely devoted to a detailed elaboration of the former work.—*City Leader*, December 2nd, 1893.

Mr Albert F Calvert tells a great deal about the resources in question, and indicates the character and situation of the various goldfields, tinfields, and coal mines.—*Liverpool Courier*, November 14th, 1893.

The writer addresses himself to the capitalist and the emigrant, and he seeks to prove that the gold deposits of Western Australia admit of almost unlimited possibilities in the near future.—*South Wales Daily News*, Nov. 14th, 1893.

Mr Calvert is well acquainted with Western Australia, and has written several very practical works dealing with the different aspects of the country.—*Sheffield Independent*, November 30th, 1893.

It is an excellent volume by one who has made the theme peculiarly his own.—*Glasgow Evening News*, November 9th, 1893.

An array of facts which now present themselves in connection with the mineral resources of Western Australia—*Westminster Gazette*, November 2nd, 1893

Its mineral wealth is practically inexhaustible, and those who desire to become acquainted with the subject ought to consult this work.—*Glasgow Baillie*, November 22nd, 1893

Mr. CALVERT's book is remarkably up-to-date, and it should prove to be much sought after by English investors and speculators as a guide to the resources, and as an index to the future prospects of the "Coming Colony," with whose fortunes the author has so thoroughly identified himself.—*Geraldton Murchison Telegraph*, W. A., December 12th, 1893

Mr. ALBERT F. CALVERT has directed his attention very particularly to Western Australia He is, therefore, competent to write with some authority on the subject.—*Glasgow Weekly Citizen*, November 25th, 1893.

The work is a useful little handbook by a man who has done much to make the world acquainted with West Australia.—*Literary World*, January 26th, 1893.

A book addressed to capitalists and emigrants, whom Mr. CALVERT seeks to convince of the vast mineral wealth of the country of which he writes, and of which he is familiar.—*Manchester Examiner*, December 13th, 1893.

Mr. CALVERT writes with authority, as he has made the subject peculiarly his own, and it should be remembered that if his forecast of the future of the Colony be deemed inflated and exaggerated, the other divisions of Australia were at one time far less likely to yield the minerals with which their names are now associated. Gold is the author's principal theme. A perusal of Mr CALVERT's pages may be recommended to all who are interested in Western Australia.—*Scottish Geographical Magazine*, January, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT is a firm believer in the future of Western Australia as an extensive mineral-bearing country, and is of opinion that the difficult question of water supply will shortly be overcome by the strenuous efforts now being made by Government in that direction. The information embodied has been gathered from official and reliable sources, as well as from Government reports and personal observation.—*Royal Colonial Institute Journal*, January, 1894

It is an agreeably disappointing volume, which appears to contain nothing but dry facts and figures, but which, on closer examination, proves to be crammed with facts less dry than interesting.—*County Council Times*, Dec. 8th, 1893

This unpretentious little book is the outcome of a firm belief in the auriferous deposits in Western Australia Mr. CALVERT is a practical man. He has studied gold-mining, and has explored the country in question, both officially and unofficially.—*Bradford Observer*, February 16th, 1894.

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WEST AUSTRALIA AND ITS GOLDFIELDS.

Gives a glowing account of the mineral wealth of the Colony, which appears to need but capital to develop its magnificent resources.—*Morning Post*, 19th April, 1893

Western Australia is now attracting more attention than ever it has done, and this little book contains a sketch of the history of the Colony, and notices not only its goldfields, but its forest resources and pearl fisheries, agriculture, fruit growing, railways, and climate.—*The Westminster Gazette*, 15th February, 1893.

Mr. CALVERT speaks from the standpoint of an expert who has examined into the facts of what he writes, and his views are therefore entitled to be received with the greater respect He has carefully examined the north-west portion of the Colony, and has found indications of gold, which warrant him in speaking of this territory as one of considerable promise in relation to the production of the precious metals. *The Mining World*, 25th February, 1893

In this little treatise Mr. ALBERT CALVERT gives a temperate, but nevertheless tempting account of the resources of the Colony, and points out the attraction it offers the emigrant.—*Land and Water*, 11th March, 1893

Mr. CALVERT is most at home in dealing with the minerals —*Bradford Observer*, 26th May, 1893

What is known and what are the present position and prospects of the Colony are concisely stated in Mr. CALVERT's little manual, and he gives such an account of the Colony that most of those who read it will desire more.—*The North British Daily Mail*, 23rd May, 1893.

It is true that Western Australia is not exactly an El Dorado, but notwithstanding that circumstance, Mr. ALBERT CALVERT finds a good deal to urge on its behalf . . . Mr CALVERT tells a flattering tale, but we should have liked it none the worse if he had hinted at the drawbacks for we suppose they must exist of this land of promise —*The Speaker*, 11th March, 1893.

Close attention is paid to the goldfields, and the chief of them described.—*Lloyd's*, 19th February, 1893.

An admirably conceived digest of the present condition of the Colony, and the inducement it offers to emigrants—*The Star*, 6th April, 1893.

Mr. CALVERT's description gives an account of indications of gold, and a detailed geological description on which definite conclusions as to the richness of the fields, and the conditions of working can be based —*Manchester Guardian*, 16th February, 1893.

Mr Calvert, who has written frequently on Western Australian affairs, gives us an excellent reference book about many other matters than goldfields associated with this country.—*Glasgow Herald*, 23rd February, 1893.

A well-arranged manual, in which the subject is discussed in a clear and exhaustive manner.—*Liverpool Mercury*, 23rd February, 1893.

Mr Albert F. Calvert's little book on the Colony and its goldfields ought to be welcome to many who are thirsting for such information regarding Western Australia's vast resources as it gives.—*The Literary World*, February 17th, 1893.

Mr. Calvert conveys in these pages much useful information with regard to a district which he recommends to those of the mother country who are suffering from the "combined pressure of over population and foreign competition."—*The Bookseller*, 7th March, 1893.

A useful handbook for intending emigrants.—*The Bookman*, March, 1893.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: ITS HISTORY AND PROGRESS.

Mr Albert Calvert is such a prolific writer upon Western Australia that we are beginning to wonder when he intends to cease. He seems to know it so thoroughly, and seems so anxious to impart his knowledge, that we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that he has exhausted the subject. At the present moment there is a great demand for literature of every kind upon this promising Colony, and in consequence Mr Calvert's books are being eagerly sought after. In reviews of his former works we have so frequently stated our opinion that he is one of the few competent to deal with such a subject having conducted an expedition into the most remote corners of it that it is wholly unnecessary here to reiterate our statements. This latest book of his is the most valuable, from many points of view. What strikes us first is the exceeding low price of it. It is a volume of nearly 300 pages; the illustrations in it are artistic and numerous; the maps are valuable and recent; the cover is strong and luxurious; and yet it is sold at the low price of 1s. To the merest outsider it will be apparent that the author must lose a great deal, and that his motive in publishing the work *cannot* be that of pecuniary gain. That, of course, is not for our consideration. Here is the book, and it is our duty to advise whether it is worthy of serious perusal. It purports, as the title indicates, to treat of the "History and Progress" of Western Australia, and this, we are convinced, has been done in a readable and interesting manner. Naturally it treats of many and various phases of possession, product, resource, &c., and these subjects seem to have been carefully and deeply studied. The opening chapters deal with the discovery of Australia; its early and gradual settlement, exploration, and its geographical and physical features. Then comes a chapter on the mineral resources of Western Australia, and this, no doubt, will to our readers be found the most interesting. This section of some 20 pages is illustrated with no less than 8 sectional plans, and three other engravings, naturally enhancing the value of the chapter. The author then deals with the forests; pastoral and agricultural lands; vine and fruit growing; pearling and list of native fishes, birds, quadrupeds, and reptiles; the shipping of the Colony, its railways, manufactures, postage, and even its education and religion. He follows with an account of its public institutions, and after exhaustively dealing with this subject, he devotes three chapters to matters of vital importance to the intending emigrant—viz., climate, finances, immigration, wages, prices, institutions, and recreations. There is a very interesting appendix to the work, giving *facsimiles* and accounts of some early newspapers of the Colony. Appendix 2 recites *in extenso* "The Homestead Act," whilst others give equally valuable information. Altogether we are greatly pleased with the work, and, as during the first few days of its appearance there has been a considerable demand for it, we have every confidence that the vast public to which it appeals will make an effort to secure a copy.—*The Mining Journal*, October 6th, 1894.

The volume forms a complete guide-book of the country. A series of plans showing the routes to the goldfields, which is published in this work, will prove of great interest. Reproductions of old Colonial papers also form a special feature, and the compact and exhaustive nature of the book renders it of the highest value either for occasional reference or for study.—*British Australasian*, October 4th, 1894.

This is another work from the pen of that most prolific of all writers on the subject of Western Australia, Mr. Albert F. Calvert. One wonders that with his many engagements he has been able to prepare this volume of nearly three hundred pages, with maps, and that he can offer it to the public at the ridiculously small sum of one shilling. He says himself that it does not pay him to do it, but that it is another service that he wishes to render to the Colony he loves, with a devotion of which he has given many proofs. The fact is, that the larger the circulation, the greater his loss will be, for every copy is sold at less than cost price. We scarcely know, therefore, that we are doing Mr Calvert a service in recommending the public to buy this book, and yet we do so, for the reason that they will here find in great detail every subject treated upon in connection with Western Australia of which they can possibly desire to have a knowledge. The maps alone are worth considerably more than the one shilling that is charged for the book, and some of the photographs are from sketches by Mr Calvert himself during his three visits to the Colony, and we learn from this volume that he is contemplating a fourth. He has gathered his materials from all the libraries, the Government Blue Books, and Year Books, and above all from his own experience in these matters, which is great. We have said enough to prove that in our opinion the volume is a useful addition to the rather formidable supply of West Australian literature, and a standing monument to the untiring industry of its author.—*Mining World*, October 6th, 1894.

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Those who are thinking of settling in Western Australia could not do better than obtain a copy of Mr. Calvert's book. It only costs one shilling, and is bound in strong boards. Full information is given relating to the climate, railways, natural features, and mineral resources of the country, and there are a large number of plans and illustrations.

The book is marvellously cheap, and its author explains that no matter how large the circulation may be, he will have to face a financial loss. His object, however, is to render Western Australia a service, and this he has assuredly done Mr. CALVERT has already issued several books relating to the Colony, but this is, perhaps, the most complete and most useful of the series. Even those who have no intention of visiting Western Australia, will profit by spending a shilling in the purchase of the volume. The information it contains is decidedly cheap at the money.—*Dundee Courier*, October 24th, 1894.

The book is lavishly illustrated with curious maps by the old cartographers, plans of the various gold districts, modern maps of the country, illustrations of the towns that have risen up within the last sixty or seventy years, and even reproductions of the early Colonial newspapers. Mr. CALVERT's new work, in short, embodies all that the general reader need desire to know, respecting a territory that requires only time and capital for its development. *Weekly Citizen*, October 13th, 1894.

Is a singularly interesting volume, which I recommend to the notice of those of my readers who may feel interested in our great Colonial possession. The book is replete with valuable information, brightly and clearly put. The illustrations, too, are excellent.—*Pelican*, October 13th, 1894

How such a book of nearly three hundred octavo pages, with such a wealth of information, and bound in cloth, can be sold for a shilling, seems a mystery.—*Glasgow Herald*, October 11th, 1894.

Mr. CALVERT's recent book is a useful addition to the literature on this subject, not only does it contain all the latest ideas upon the vast resources of these western goldfields, but he has also embodied a mass of useful information which must be of great use to intending settlers in the country.—*Money*, October 10th, 1894

The work contains a great amount of information, which will be found particularly interesting just now, when so much attention is being devoted to that Colony. The book is profusely illustrated, and will prove a very handy reference on many subjects, especially mining, of Western Australia.—*City Times*, October 6th, 1894.

Much of the matter in the book was personally collected a year ago on the occasion of a third visit to the Colony The author is deeply impressed with the romance and the reality of his subject alike, and imparts his knowledge without stint. There is an excellent map of the Colony showing the positions of the several goldfields, and there are plans of the leases on the several fields, besides numerous excellent illustrations of scenery, natives, and Colonial celebrities. The historical portion of the book is full of curious matter, ancient and modern, and altogether the two hundred and eighty-three pages for 1s., make up the best and most interesting book that could be desired.—*The Capitalist*, October 13th, 1894.

The book is very readable, even if Mr. CALVERT makes no pretence to style. Intending emigrants to Western Australia will find it brimming over with statistics and "hard facts," while those desiring, for purposes of reference at home, a book which lacks little but an index, will find here everything they can require Moreover, we have plenty of most interesting maps and illustrations. Mr. CALVERT, besides being a mining engineer and a statistician, is a very fair sketcher, and he enlivens his pages with the result of his pencillings, while his plans of the principal goldfields are very well done indeed. And there is some interesting information about the pearl fisheries. Mr. CALVERT has produced a very interesting and useful book.—*Daily Chronicle*, October 24th, 1894.

It is an "up-to-date" account of the Colony, which is doing so much to justify Mr. CALVERT's high opinion As at the price at which it is published—one shilling Mr. CALVERT cannot hope to reap pecuniary advantage from the volume, the work will place the Colony under a new obligation to its author —*Home News*, October 12th, 1894

Mr. A. F. CALVERT has written much and earnestly on the subject, though he is yet a comparatively young man, and his most recent work, entitled *Western Australia: Its History and Progress*, from the press of Simpkin, Marshall and Co., London, will enhance his reputation as an explorer, an observer, a mining engineer, and an author. *Glasgow Baillie*, October 10th, 1894

This book is indispensable for any one who may purpose emigrating, either with the view of settling in a township, or of trying for the favour of fickle fortune at the goldfields. The author has the gift of writing unpretentious but instructive prose, and his "plain, unvarnished tale," becomes a romantic story, because of the fascinating nature of his subject The volume contains quite a remarkable series of maps, dating from 1530 to the present time, and showing the progress of discovery in a panoramic fashion. There are also numerous views of different parts of Western Australia, including Perth, Fremantle, and Geraldton, and pictures of incidents connected with the exploration parties, and portraits of the leading officials.—*Dundee Advertiser*, October 25th, 1894.

The present work is probably the best guide that persons thinking of finding their fortunes in Western Australia can get. There is a good deal of the practical information required by prospective settlers. Mr CALVERT knows the country thoroughly, and the information he gives may be accepted as wholly reliable —*Daily Free Press*, Oct 15th, 1894

Is an excellent handbook to that enterprising and popular part of the Colonial Empire. The volume is carefully written, and is embellished by maps and numerous pictorial illustrations.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald*, October 13th, 1894

It contains a wide variety of useful information to intending emigrants, and as the price is only one shilling, even the most hard driven can afford a copy —*People*, October 14th, 1894

For the small sum of one shilling, people who wish to know something about West Australia in general, and its new goldfields in particular, can obtain a well printed and well bound work, by Mr. ALBERT F CALVERT.—*Statist*, October 13th, 1894

What makes it more specially interesting at this moment is the latest budget of glowing tidings from Coolgardie, which is occupying the attention of so many people in the commercial world. —*Sun*, October 10th, 1894.

Although a great amount of literature—hand books, guide books, and text books, dealing with Western Australia have already appeared, the rapid change renders such works speedily antiquated, and for this reason the present up-to-date book is issued.—*Eastern Press*, October 20th, 1894.

The author of this latest account of Western Australia is already well known as a writer upon the great south land, and his name is a sufficient guarantee that there is useful practical information to be found in the book, conveyed in terse and sometimes eloquent language Mr. CALVERT has succeeded in packing an immense amount of information into a small compass.—*Commerce*, October 24th, 1894.

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